

# THE MAN I KNEW



OUR MAN

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# THE MAN I KNEW

BY

THE COUNTESS HAIG

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## FOREWORD

It is with some diffidence that I offer this rather short and intimate life-story of my husband, written after many disappointments about his own diaries and letters. I had hoped that my husband's own words would have told the tale in the beautiful language that he was accustomed to write.

The diaries that he kept during the Great War were not finally finished by him to use for publication. He had intended to omit from those notes certain passages which he would never have wished published.

I carried on this work and had prepared those War diaries, with extracts from letters to me, making the omissions that I think my husband would have made. With these I had embodied the diaries and letters written by my husband during the earlier years of his life, and had added an introduction dealing with his childhood and also a chapter on our engagement and marriage. That introduction and chapter are now included in this book.

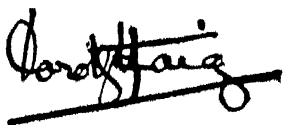
My husband had looked on the diaries written before the Great War as of no value, and indeed in a letter written to me during the early days of the War, when I was packing up at Government House, Aldershot, he instructed me to destroy them as they were not worth storing. He never realised even after the War that this drastic order had not been carried out by me and never again asked for those early diaries. It was the simplicity of his character that prevented him giving a thought that anything that he might have written would be of such interest in the future. I had hidden

## FOREWORD

them to ensure that my husband would not throw them away as rubbish, and it is interesting to note that the putting together of those early diaries gave the greatest comfort to me after Douglas had passed away, for they gave me details of his life before I knew him. All who knew Douglas will know of his extraordinary reserve (true to Scots type), and he had told me very little of what he had done before I married him.

This book, *The Man I Knew*, which I am now presenting, written in my own words, has also been the cause of much anxiety. The barriers against publication have now, however, been removed, and I hope that my poor attempt will be of some interest to many readers, and that it will give to them a picture of my husband as a human being on the warm side of life rather than a famous man who belongs to the cold facts of history.

It is impossible for me to write of our life together without bringing myself far too much into the picture, and I therefore apologise that one of so little interest should so often be mentioned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Dorothy Douglas'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

BEMERSYDE  
1936

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His favourite quotation:—

Question not, but live and labour  
Till the goal is won;  
Helping every feeble neighbour,  
Seeking help from none;  
Life is mostly froth and bubble,  
Two things stand like stone;  
*Kindness* in another's trouble,  
Courage in your own.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

It was always my husband's wish, very frequently expressed to me, that I should, at some time, write the story of his life. He knew of course that biographies of one kind and another would be certain to be published and that in the great mass of literature of the war many accounts would be given of the part he played in it.

During the war, he kept a very complete diary; and he and I spent much time after the war in adding to the diary certain documents and letters which were of special importance and interest at the time.

In putting these records together, he had always at the back of his mind the idea that they would give an account of the true happenings, but he had no intention of anticipating the verdict of history, which, on the lives of all great men, has a queer habit of changing and readjusting itself, sometimes fairly, sometimes falsely as great events recede farther and farther from actuality and become the great stories of the past. He desired rather to make sure that whatever historians and others might have to say of him in the future, it would be possible by reference to these records to know the whole truth of all the large and frequently contentious issues that arose at various stages of the campaign, so far as they affected him. It is possible that, had he lived, he might himself have compiled from these records the complete and final account of his life, and in particular, that part of it in which he held a position greater in its tremendous responsibility than that ever occupied by any other soldier in the history of the British army.

There is perhaps nothing more difficult than to show the world a great man of action as a simple human being. To



## THE MAN I KNEW

those who have not lived intimately with them there is a feeling that such men stand coldly remote from ordinary life, and that there are no points of contact such as are to be found, for example, in the lives of great thinkers and writers. My husband, however, never regarded himself as a great man of action in the sense that nearly all famous sailors and soldiers have come to be regarded. His intense modesty made it impossible for him to view himself in such a light or to dramatise himself in any way. It was always his desire that, whatever view the world might take of him, he should, as the Commander who led the British army to victory, first of all be regarded and always known for just these simple qualities that are the common possession of any human being, no matter of what class or rank.

D. H.

# THE MAN I KNEW

CHAPTER I  
CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH  
1861-1884



## CHAPTER I

### CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

DOUGLAS HAIG was the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Haig of Cameron Bridge, and was born on the 19th of June 1861, at 24 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh. I am indebted to his brother John<sup>1</sup> for an account of Douglas and his family at that time, and I cannot do better than give some descriptive details in his brother's own words. He writes: "I remember distinctly being told that a new baby had arrived in place of Georgie.<sup>2</sup> I remember, too, his being christened by Dr. Grant in the drawing-room of 24 Charlotte Square. The reverend gentleman douched him heavily with cold water, which the infant resisted strongly by screaming loudly.

"Our father had taken a flat at No. 13 Hope Street, a town residence for his family who were attending schools in Edinburgh. Afterwards he bought the ground flat and basement No. 24 Charlotte Square, which was under 13 Hope Street, and put in a stairway which made the two into one house. When Douglas arrived the family living at home consisted of my second eldest brother Hugh,<sup>3</sup> my sisters Janet<sup>4</sup> and Henrietta,<sup>5</sup> my brother George and myself.

"Douglas was then a strong healthy child. After the birth of Douglas our mother was in indifferent health, and as soon as she could be moved, she, with the baby and the younger children, went to a farmhouse called Milldown, near Coldingham in Berwickshire, which our mother rented every summer for sea-bathing. We remained there till the

<sup>1</sup> John—Captain J. A. Haig (deceased).

<sup>2</sup> Georgie—George Ogilvy Haig (deceased).

<sup>3</sup> Hugh—Hugh Veitch Haig of Ramornie (deceased).

<sup>4</sup> Janet—Miss Janet Stein Haig, later Mrs. Charles Edwin Haig (deceased).

<sup>5</sup> Henrietta—Miss Henrietta Haig, later Mrs. William Jameson (deceased).

end of August, when we returned to Cameron House, Fife. It was at Cameron House that Douglas spent most of his childhood. As a baby, Douglas was carried, or put in a kind of chair on a pony's back. We never had a perambulator."

From further details given to me by his brother John, I see the child Douglas as a small boy with long fair curls, but with little or no hint in his face of the good looks he was to possess when he grew older. He was rather marred by prominent teeth, which made the mouth ugly and seemed to affect the whole face, but his curls, in his mother's eyes, were a rare and beautiful adornment. His brothers and sisters, however, did not think so, and one day they seized the unfortunate boy and cut off the curls, and ordered him to carry them to his mother in his pinafore. It was a great blow to her, but she kept them carefully in a parcel, which was found after her death.

At this time the Haigs were living at Cameron House, Fife, and Douglas and his two older brothers were not worried very much by lessons. They were allowed to run more or less wild. One of their favourite forms of amusement was riding on two ponies most prophetically called "The General" and "Bismarck".

I have a very clear picture in my mind of Douglas at this time, the picture of a child very self-willed, extremely difficult to manage, and subject to occasional fits of violent temper. Even his mother, whose love for him was quite exceptional, and perhaps the most abiding and powerful influence on his whole life, was, at times, quite unable to manage him.

Many stories are told of his intractability, and one illustrates very clearly how extremely difficult he could be on occasion. His mother took the whole family to be photographed, but when all was ready, Douglas refused to sit still and began to shout and kick to such an extent that it was



JOHN (BEE)

GEORGE

DOUGLAS





## CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

impossible to take the photograph. No power of persuasion had any effect, and the attempt to photograph the family had to be abandoned. The following day, however, his mother took Douglas alone to the photographer's, and by means of a promise that he should be allowed to hold a favourite pistol, the photograph was successfully taken.

His mother was constantly making efforts to induce Douglas "to be a good boy", but it must be admitted that the child did not always respond to them. When he was very small the family moved to Lee Park, Blackheath, and it was there that Douglas was given a drum on which his mother had written, "Douglas Haig, 1 Lee Park, Blackheath. Sometimes a good boy." He was very proud of this drum, and would carry it about quite oblivious to the amusement of those who occasionally stopped him and read the inscription. She also gave him a handkerchief on which she wrote, as a further encouragement to be good, "Douglas Haig. A good boy." The drum was lost, but the handkerchief, and many letters written by his mother, and her Bible and Prayer Book were treasured and kept by Douglas all his life. It was probably because he was so difficult to manage, and yet so obviously adored his mother, that she showered upon him her affection and attention. Even in those very early days, while he was wilfully disobeying her, he seemed to realise her devotion to him, and there is plenty of evidence to show that he was often anxious to please her.

Just before he went to his first school, his mother, a deeply religious woman, was instilling into his young mind the love of all things that were beautiful and of good report. From her he received that early religious teaching the influence of which was to remain with him all his life, and be in many hours of trial and difficulty a source of inexhaustible strength.

The following continues Brother John's account:

## THE MAN I KNEW

"Although Douglas was the Benjamin, he did not come in for all the spoiling one would have expected. He only got a share of it, because George and I, coming after a big gap (a boy and a girl having died between Henrietta and me), were little older than he. Our mother lavished her affection indiscriminately on her three 'bees', as she called us. She was a very beautiful woman, and was married when she was eighteen (my father was thirty-seven). After her first son, William,<sup>1</sup> was born, she withdrew almost entirely from the outside world and devoted her life to her children. She heard our prayers night and morning, and in winter and summer came to the nursery at 4 A.M. to see if all was well with us. I feel that her devotion to us children shortened her life by many years. She died in 1879, a comparatively young woman, at the age of fifty-eight (one year after my father).

"Our father was a good liberally-minded man. He may have been a little quick-tempered and often used bad language, but, in those days, swearing was considered by many an attribute, and we did not mind. My father suffered terribly from asthma, which necessitated my parents going abroad for his health every winter. He died in 1878 at the age of seventy-six.

"I cannot recollect exactly, but I do not think that, except for a few lessons from a governess, Douglas received much education before May 1869, when he was sent to join me at Mr. Paterson's School, Clifton Bank, St. Andrews. In October 1869, Douglas and I were put to board with a Miss Hepburn at 12 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh, and Douglas attended the Edinburgh Collegiate<sup>2</sup> under Dr. Bryce in

<sup>1</sup> William Henry Haig of Broomfield, Midlothian (deceased).

<sup>2</sup> The Collegiate was an excellent private school, and Dr. Bryce, the headmaster, was one of the finest teachers which a city of great teachers ever produced. Besides Douglas, several other Collegiate men have made their mark in the world; amongst them are Professor Sir Arthur Thomson, Thomas Bryce, F.R.S., Sir John Findlay and Sir Thomas Hutchison.



DOUGLAS WITH HIS FAVOURITE PISTOL



HIS FIRST KILT



## CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

Charlotte Square. Miss Hepburn was a highly religious old lady and a strong 'Free Kirker'. We were taken every Sunday to Dr. Moody's Church in Queen Street. He had a long rostrum which served as a pulpit, on which he walked about. He preached the dullest sermons, usually for over an hour. We much resented having to put the whole of our weekly allowance (3d.) into the collection plate, for the benefit of the Free Kirk. Douglas followed me to Mr. Hanbury's School, Orwell House, at Clifton, near Rugby, and remained there till October 1875, when he went to Clifton College. In 1879, after our mother's death, he went to Oxford (Brasenose)."

From his mother's letters and other sources, I have obtained further little human facts about Douglas as a boy. There is a recollection of him, when a pupil at the Collegiate School in Edinburgh, for which I am indebted to the Rev. Dr. Robertson, a master at the School, who is still alive. Dr. Robertson remembers the small boy always well turned-out, with a bright and open face and very popular with his schoolfellows. In his work he was perhaps slow and backward, but always tackled the task allotted to him. Dr. Robertson has a vivid recollection of Douglas being carried shoulder-high by his schoolfellows, after some game, probably football.

When the time came for Douglas to go to Orwell House, Rugby, his health was poor, and he was already suffering from acute attacks of asthma. A near relative describes one of these attacks during a visit he paid to her in his holidays. "The boy", she wrote, "was sitting up in bed with a shawl round his shoulders fighting for breath and smoking *datura tatula* cigarettes, which seemed to do him good." She remarks that "he continued to suffer from asthma for many years, but undoubtedly cured himself by his determination always to avoid anything that might bring on a fresh attack".

During these early school-days at Orwell House, Douglas showed a great lack of concentration. His mother, realising this, urged him in all her letters to work harder. Work was apparently something of an effort. Probably his backwardness at this date was largely due to the fact that his health was so poor. One of the school reports (Orwell House) which has been preserved states that he "was very backward in Latin"; "Spelling very poor and writing careless"; "Rather tiresome at times"; "As he is backward he ought to be more attentive".

From Orwell House, his mother was very anxious that he should go to Rugby, but it soon became clear that he was not sufficiently advanced in his studies to be up to the standard required. It was a grievous disappointment to her, but she carefully hid her disappointment from the child, and consoled both herself and him by saying that it was all done for some good but inscrutable purpose. It was after his failure to enter Rugby that it was decided in 1876 to send him to Clifton College.

During those difficult early years, there is no doubt that the influence of Douglas's mother was of supreme importance. At her death (1879) the boy was heartbroken, but his sister Henrietta did her best to console him. The close intimacy and devotion between these two began then, and is shown in his letters to her.

Douglas entered Clifton in October 1875. It was intended that the boy should go to his brother's rooms at the School House, but, for some reason, Dr. Percival put Douglas first in Mr. Marks's house, moving him two years later to the School House.

During his first year he was in the Lower IVth on the Classical Side. At the end of 1877 he was promoted to the Lower Vth, and, up to that point, he had made quite ordinary progress. He seemed then to slow down, and remained four terms in the Vth. He was seventh in this Form when



THEIR MOTHER, DOUGLAS, JOHN (BEE), GEORGE





## CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

he left in April 1879. He played Rugby football for the School House and obtained a school cap.

At first his reports were bad, and he found great difficulty with Latin. Encouraged, however, by letters from his mother, urging him to work, in his last year he passed first in Latin. All his Clifton reports were preserved, and some extracts are of interest: "His spirits run away with him at times, but he is a good honest worker and player"; "A capital fellow both in work and play"; "Has done thoroughly well, a capital head of the form".

After a lapse of so many years it is difficult to obtain from Douglas's contemporaries any intimate details about him, but they respected and admired his character and manner. Few seem to have known him intimately, for he was of a very reserved nature. I have, however, been able to obtain from one who knew Douglas at Clifton a few notes, which I give here:

"I remember Douglas Haig proposing a motion in the School House Debating Society—'That the Army has done the country more service than the Navy'. . . . My recollections of him are of a very determined youngster, whose clean appearance was merely the anticipation of the day when he became the smartest of smart cavalry officers. He was a fine character of a gentleman then as he was to the end of his days. My recollection of him has always been of a boy particularly genial and sociable. His brain was alert and active. He was very popular in the School House. I can see him now playing half-back (School XV) as active as a cat and as brave as a lion.

"To me he was a lovable boy, full of guts and by no means lacking in fun. We were often side by side on the rugger field, and a dour fighter he was.

"Quite contrary to the general opinion, it was at Clifton that he first began to think of his future career."

After leaving Clifton in 1879, Douglas went with his

brother Hugo (Hugh) on a holiday trip to California. A letter written by him at this time says that the Headmaster of Clifton (Dr. Percival) wanted him to remain at Clifton till Christmas. His brother William, however, who was twenty years older than Douglas, and whose opinion carried great weight in family affairs, advised him to go to Rhodes, the crammer, in order to work up his subjects for matriculation at Oxford.

Douglas went to Oxford in October 1880, when he was just over nineteen years of age, entering as a Commoner at Brasenose College. He passed all the examinations for his B.A. Degree, but it was not conferred because, owing to illness, he was unable to complete the required period of residence. Had he been able to stay another term, he would have obtained his degree.

At Oxford he first began to play polo, playing in the University Match of 1882. There is a good story to illustrate his interest in the game, for which I am indebted to Mr. Leeson Marshall, who was at New College at the time, and was very friendly with Douglas, who had just formed a Polo Club. A question arose as to where the game could be played. Douglas, with others, drew up a petition to the authorities to be allowed to play in the parks. He suggested that, as a touch of history might appeal to them, mention might be made that "Polo was the historic game brought to Europe by the famous explorer, Marco Polo"! The authorities refused the request, but polo was played in Port Meadow, and the club was a great success. Mr. Marshall confirms what others have said—that Douglas had then definitely made up his mind to go into the Army. The two were discussing future careers together, and his friend had said that he did not see much prospect in an army career. Douglas, looking very determined, replied, "I am going into the Army. It all depends on a man himself how he gets on in any profession."



FOOTBALL GROUP AT CLIFTON, 1877



## CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

While at Oxford Douglas began to keep a diary. It was rather fragmentary and has the characteristics of most first diaries. It must have been something of an effort to keep. It records, for the most part, his keen interest in polo and hunting, comments on the day's work and play and on the men with whom he came into contact.

There is, however, an excellent account of Douglas's life at Oxford written by Lord Askwith which I feel I ought to quote, and I have gratefully to acknowledge permission to do so:

*Extract from "The Oxford Magazine"*  
*February 23rd, 1928*

On the first evening of that October day, he from Clifton and I from Marlborough, lads of the same age, sat side by side in the Old Hall, facing the large picture of Principal Frodsham Hudson; and afterwards in my room, as his wine had not arrived, sipped a bottle of claret together. We laughed over our interviews held that morning with Dr. Cradock, who had been Principal at that date for twenty-seven years. To me he had finally ended by saying "Drink plenty of port, sir. You want port in this damp climate." To him he had remarked, "Ride, sir, ride. I like to see the gentlemen of Brasenose in top boots." Such jerked-out and unexpected pieces of advice to lads fresh from school endeared Principal Cradock to generations of B.N.C. men from their day of entry. Then we talked of future careers. Haig said that being too old to enter in the usual way, he had determined to try to enter the army through the University, an opportunity but lately, I think, introduced.

Little during the evening could that youth have fore-shadowed that he would be Commander-in-Chief of the greatest Army the Empire had ever produced, in the greatest war known to history. On December 16th, 1927, after he had presided over a dinner given to the Principal, Mr. Sampson, and the Fellows of B.N.C., I had with him a long talk; he made plans for future visits to Oxford, spoke of old days, said he remembered every word of our forty-seven-year-old talk as if it had been but yesterday, and before the end of January 1928 he passed away.

## THE MAN I KNEW

The Rev. E. T. Turner, Registrar of the University, whose decision was like the law of the Medes and Persians, assigned him No. 5 room at B.N.C. in a building numbered IX, built, it was said, temporarily during the Peninsular War, propped up by successive new paperings of decorating undergraduates, but otherwise of thin lath and plaster. It is now pulled down, but lasted over one hundred years, and here Haig lived for two terms, not liking these meagre quarters. In athletics he started on the river, but his frame and weight were too slight, and he could not bear the monotony of tubbings or the upbraidings of coaches, and soon left it for the hunting field. I can see him now, then as ever, scrupulously dressed, walking through the "Quad", with his tails showing beneath a short covert coat, as was then the fashion.

For the Schools he read French Literature and the Elements of Political Economy under (Sir) Richard Lodge, and in other subjects, such as Homer, dealt with Walter Pater. Mr. Sampson, the present Principal, tells me that Haig said Pater taught him how to write English. His special tutor was Dr. Heberden, the late Principal of B.N.C. and a famous Vice-Chancellor, whom he held in real affection, and my own impression is that Dr. Heberden, by example, showed him the duty of thinking of others.

In social life Haig was elected to the (now defunct) Octagon Wine Club, but soon left it to become a member of the Junior Common Room or Phoenix Club; and later was also elected to the Bullingdon, that Club famed beyond the University for its success in the support of interest in the horse, as well as of sport and hospitality generally. No dinner and no club, however, deterred Haig if he was not prepared for a particular lecture or essay. As to wine and cards, he was more than abstemious. His object was to pass his Schools, and to pass them quickly, and he cut or left a social gathering for his books with singular tenacity of purpose. The College records and the remembrance of those who were his teachers show that he sailed through his Schools with ease and speed, passing Moderations, the old "Rudiments Examination", and three Groups, Ancient History, French, and Political Economy.

By ill-luck he missed the Summer Term of 1881 through an attack of influenza or similar illness, and though he had passed all his Schools, did not qualify by residence for the B.A. Degree. Of this he was aware, and scrupulously enquired, when advanced in 1915 to an Hon. Fellowship of Brasenose, and in 1919 to be an Hon. D.C.L.



AT OXFORD, 1882





## CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

of the University, whether he had passed sufficient Schools to entitle him to these honours!

Among his undergraduate colleagues, he would chiefly hold converse with the Puxleys, both Etonians, one in the 'Varsity Eight, Robert Baillie (later Sir Robert Baillie) from Australia, George Moke (later George Norrie) from America, "Jake" Leche from Cheshire, and Warburton Pike, all of whom have passed away; and, outside the College, he had friends in the House, and a few others in B.N.C. such as Douglas H. Barry and H. S. Barton of his own year, and also colleagues in the Phoenix, such as Colonel Robertson-Aikman, but elsewhere few, if any, and he seldom came to Vincent's.

While courteous to everyone, he did not spread himself, and stuck to his College and the House. The only outside persons, if one may use such a definition, whom he ever introduced to Oxford were brothers, and he never (as far as I am aware) entertained any woman except his sister, though I have seen his face set, in a silent but obstinate protest, against any loose joke about women. My impression was and is that he disliked any remarks derogatory to women, and showed it, without speaking, so clearly that any would-be raconteur "dried up". His principal friend was "Tommy" Hitchcock, of B.N.C., from America, himself a great polo player, and father of a great polo player; and by him Haig was started on "polo", worked hard at the game with strenuous energy, and with Hitchcock played polo for the University of 1882 and 1883.

Returning to residence in October 1881, after his illness, he was nervous over his loss of time. Transferred to the right-hand ground floor rooms of No. IV staircase, in the old Quad, he would shut himself up for hours working for the particular Schools in prospect, but never omitted a ride or walk to keep physically fit. He would attend the big College lunches, then a feature, and the Sunday "Vampyre" Club lunches, and so knew and was pleasant to everyone, not minding with whom he sat, but by no means courting popularity. He liked to talk quietly to his neighbour, and generally about a subject interesting to his neighbour or affecting the life or athletics of the College rather than his own interests. He was keenly desirous that the community should succeed, and loved to hear of a successful bump on the river or a win of the Cricket XI. He loved also a quiet joke, but I never heard him make one. To Hall he seldom, if ever, went; but dined out, always returning early, and hating to sit up at night.

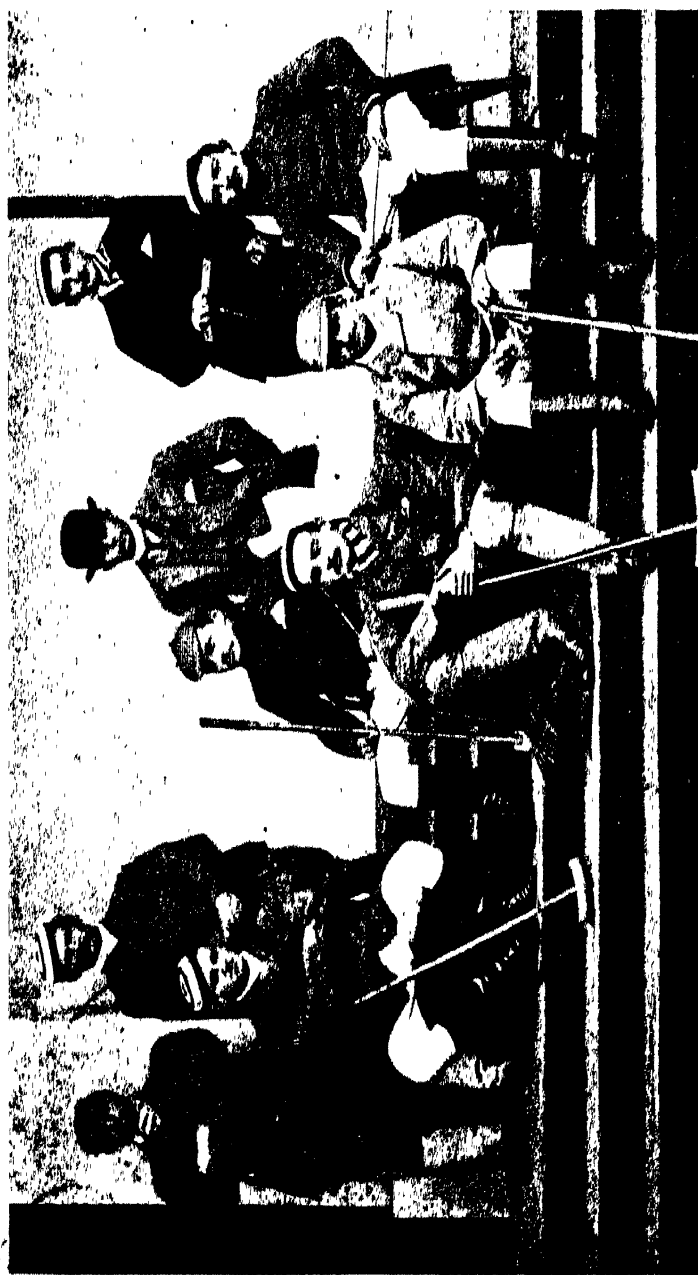
## THE MAN I KNEW

In October 1882, he went out to lodgings in King Edward Street, and except for lectures and luncheons came seldom into the College. At the end of the Summer Term of 1883 he left.

I doubt if he came again to Oxford for many years, occupied as he was in India, South Africa, and the claims of the Service, but he always liked to meet a B.N.C. man, and in 1908, when made a Gentleman Commoner, expressed his affection for and loyalty to his College and Oxford, and again in 1919 when he came up to receive the degree of D.C.L. and the freedom of the City of Oxford. In pink and scarlet gowns, he, in full Army uniform and University gown, his old tutor Dr. Heberden (the Principal) and I started from B.N.C. for Trinity College, where the procession was to assemble. When we came to the huge crowd by Hertford College the Principal and I fell back, leaving Haig to salute, with solemn and almost shy manner, in answer to the enthusiastic greetings. "You traitor", he said when he first noticed at Trinity this procedure; "I never knew you had left me to myself." Later he came to a large dinner of B.N.C. men, old and new, in the Oxford Town Hall, and as I have mentioned, presided at a recent dinner in London. At the reception before the Oxford dinner he seemed strangely cold and reserved, especially when a group of maimed and crippled men came through, but sitting next to him at dinner he said to me that he could not speak—he had felt a lump in his throat.

To Brasenose College he presented the maps used by him in 1918 when the Allied Armies achieved final success, a singular liaison, I would venture to think, between undergraduate and Oxford, not less romantic, in the best sense of the word, than that of Cecil Rhodes to his College and University, and absolutely characteristic of the main feature of Lord Haig's career—loyalty. Without that final power of abnegation of self on the part of the Chief of the Empire Army, what would have been the end of the war?

So many erroneous statements have been made as to Douglas's purposeless state of mind when he came down from Oxford, that I feel it necessary to remove any false impression of him that may have been created. I have already shown, from records written by his friends, that, far from being a young man without a purpose, he had not only made up his mind to an army career, but had actually made arrangements to sit for the entrance examination for



H. Heywood Lonsdale  
E. S. Douglas Pennant  
E. W. Baird

E. F. Charteris  
D. Haig  
J. P. E. Gilmour

R. C. Smith  
J. H. R. Bailey  
W. Vaughan

POLO GROUP AT SANDHURST, 1884



## CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

Sandhurst, as a University candidate. For the Sandhurst examination he required further study in particular subjects, and for this purpose he went to Mr. Litchfield, the crammer, at Hampton Court, July 21st, 1883. Before going to Mr. Litchfield's establishment he went to France for a short holiday.

Douglas passed his examination as a University candidate and entered Sandhurst on February 12th, 1884. This is an important date, for from the moment of his entry into Sandhurst he set himself to the tasks with a ruthless determination and succeeded in passing out not only with honours but first in order of merit, and was awarded the Anson Memorial Sword as Senior Officer. While Douglas does not appear to have made many close friendships at Sandhurst, his extraordinary proficiency not only in his studies but in athletics set him apart from his fellows and attracted the attention of his instructors. There is a story, which I believe is true, that one of the instructors on being asked who was the most promising cadet, replied, "A Scottish lad, Douglas Haig, is top in everything, books, drill, riding and sports. He is to go into the cavalry and before he has finished he will be top of the army."



## CHAPTER II

1885-1905





## CHAPTER II

1885-1905

ON the 7th of February 1885, Douglas was gazetted to the 7th Hussars and joined them at Aldershot, where the regiment was then quartered. His life as a regimental officer was strenuous and his use of leave brought him a varied experience of the North-West Frontier, Ceylon, Australia, France and Germany. Right from the first he distinguished himself as a fine polo-player, and all through his diaries and letters to his sister Henrietta he describes many famous polo matches. He invariably represented his regiment in all important contests.

In November 1886 the regiment sailed from Portsmouth for service in India, where Douglas remained with them till April 1890, when he came home for a couple of months' leave. In November 1891 he was specially selected by the Inspector-General of Cavalry, India, General G. Luck, to act as Brigade-Major, and three months later Lieut.-General Sir George Greaves selected him for special duty at Poona.

Douglas left India in September 1892 in order to prepare himself for the examination for the Staff College. Although he studied very hard for this examination, he failed to satisfy the examiners in mathematics by the small margin of eighteen marks. He was also rejected on account of colour-blindness. This happened in June 1893 and was the first serious check in his career. Douglas felt it very keenly and he set himself the task of finding some other means of entering the Staff College, but this he did not achieve till 1896. Actually, he was eligible for a "nomination" by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge (who was then serving his last year as Commander-in-Chief), having been

## THE MAN I KNEW

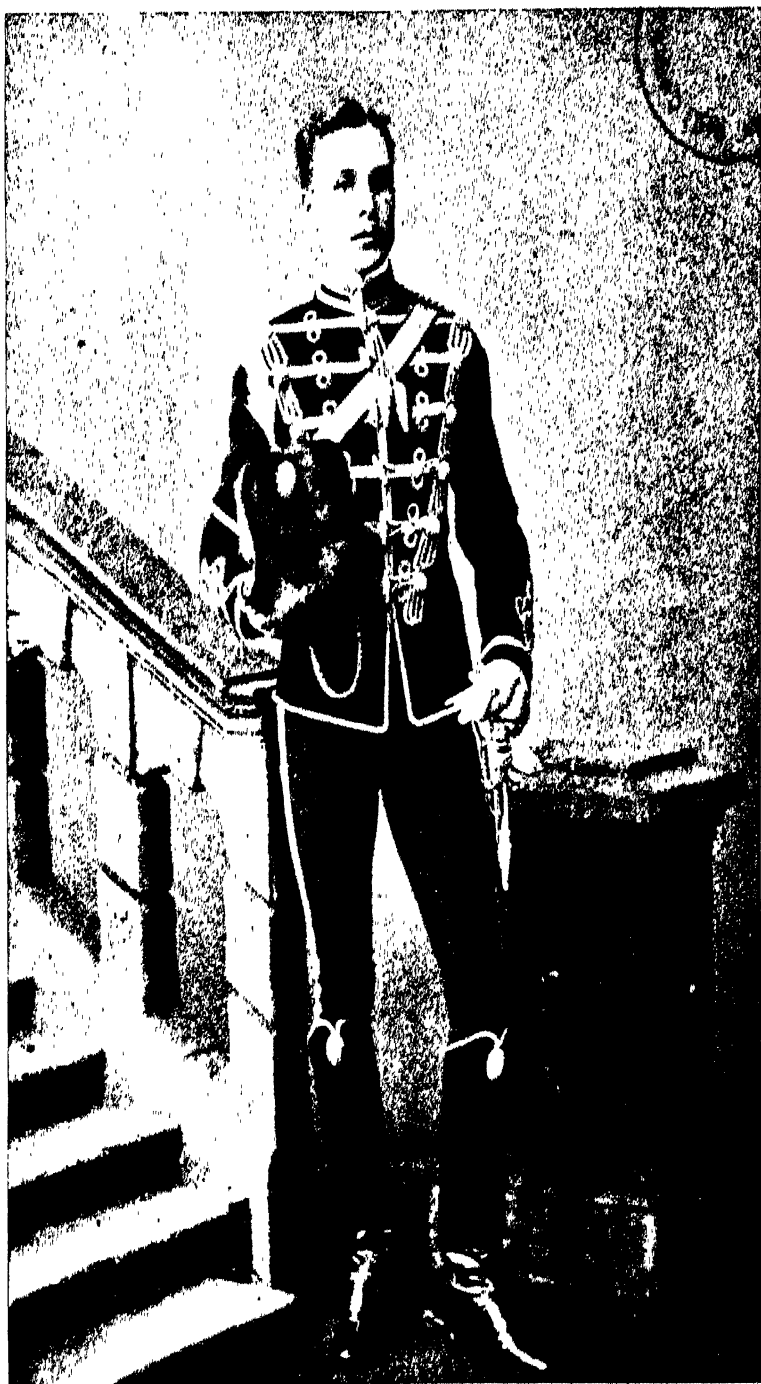
recommended by General Sir George Greaves on two occasions during the two years that the 7th Hussars were under his command. Brigadier-General Bengough had also recommended him for a nomination. He was advised that his name would be submitted to the Duke, but nothing seems to have come from it then.

Douglas was particularly annoyed about the colour-blindness disqualification. He always said that the Medical Board that examined him exceeded the orders contained in the Queen's Regulations, as there was no direction to the Board to test candidates for the Staff College for colour-blindness, and that only those candidates who appeared before the Medical Board in London were so tested. Moreover, Professor Mohren, the great German oculist, had tested him for colour-blindness and had stated that he was not colour-blind.

After his failure to gain admission to the Staff College he returned to his regiment in India, but in April of the following year he came back to England again to take up duties as A.D.C. to General Keith Fraser, then Inspector-General of Cavalry in England.

When he entered the Staff College in 1896 he very soon became outstanding for his sheer ability, and it was at this time that Colonel G. F. R. Henderson, the chief instructor, made his well-known prediction that Douglas would one day be Commander-in-Chief of the British army.

Douglas left England early in 1898 for special service in the Sudan. During this period he wrote constantly to his sister Henrietta. His letters were very full of descriptions of his activities and were all very carefully preserved by Henrietta. It was only after her death that her husband came upon them and sent them to me, as he thought I might be interested in them. The letters are written in a very intimate way. Douglas kept nothing back from her and expressed his opinions on many matters and personalities quite freely.



7TH HUSSARS, 1885



Between Douglas and his sister, as I have already mentioned, there was a deep affection and understanding which lasted all their lives, and in writing very fully to Henrietta Douglas knew that he could trust her implicitly. These letters, so carefully kept and jealously guarded by a devoted sister, form a most important part of my husband's writings, and it has always been my intention to publish them just as they are. I propose therefore in this book to omit all reference to the years that Douglas spent in the Sudan and South African campaigns. When the letters and diaries relating to these periods are published they will describe, much better than any biographer could hope to do, these important years of Douglas's life.

Douglas arrived back in London from the Sudan on the 5th of October 1898. He rejoined his regiment, the 7th Hussars, for a short time prior to his appointment as Brigade Major of the Cavalry Brigade at Aldershot, where he remained till the 23rd of September 1899, when he left London for South Africa. Three years were spent there, during the greater part of which he acted as Chief Staff Officer to General Sir John French. At the end of the South African War Douglas returned to England with the 17th Lancers, of which regiment he was now in command. He arrived on the 19th of October 1902. A year later he left again for India, this time as Inspector-General of Cavalry. He was then only forty-two, and at that time there was no record in the annals of the British Army in India of an officer being appointed to a post of such distinction at anything like so early a period in his career. During the next eighteen months Douglas again wrote to his sister long interesting letters, in which he described his work in India. He arrived home on leave on the 5th of May 1905, and it was during this leave that we first met.



CHAPTER III  
ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE

1905





## CHAPTER III

### ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE

I HAD just missed meeting my future husband on three previous occasions. The first was when I was acting as Maid of Honour to Queen Victoria and was in attendance on Her Majesty at the time of her review at Aldershot. The Queen had wanted to take me with her, but unfortunately many other members of the household had prior claims, and I had to be left behind. On this occasion I might have had some opportunity of speaking to him. The second time was during King Edward's and Queen Alexandra's visit to Edinburgh. Queen Alexandra also expressed the wish to take her two Maids of Honour in attendance, but, for the same reason, we could not be taken. Queen Alexandra told us how sorry she was and that she had tried very hard to get the authorities to agree. Douglas was then C.O. of the 17th Lancers, which regiment acted as mounted escort during the week.

The third occasion was when I was in attendance at the Inter-Regimental Polo Tournament at Hurlingham—July 11th, 1903. I remember the match very vividly. The Royal Family and household had been told that the Blues would win, and each and all had many friends among the young officers in the regiment. All kinds of arrangements had been made for dinner-parties that evening to celebrate the regiment's almost certain victory. To the surprise of all, the game did not progress as expected. The Blues did not seem to be getting on well. Their play became wild, whilst the team of the 17th Lancers continued a steady, combined game. Everyone noted that the strong player who never missed, nor sent a crooked shot, and who kept

the whole team together, was *Colonel Douglas Haig*, playing back. Many comments were made in the Royal Box about the Colonel's remarkable play and his alert, smart appearance. The Duke of Cambridge seemed delighted that his own regiment, the 17th Lancers, were winning. It was a great surprise and disappointment to the other occupants of the Royal Box when the Blues were beaten, but Queen Alexandra, with her usual charm, congratulated the Duke of Cambridge warmly and insisted on him helping her to present the cup. I stood back as the team came into the Royal Box to receive it, and was standing very close to *Colonel Haig* whose personality seemed such a vital one.

I should explain that my brother, Lord Vivian, had been for some time in the 17th Lancers, and had been very seriously wounded at Tarkastad, South Africa. It was *Colonel Haig* who had most kindly sent a telegram to my family telling us of my brother's exact condition. This telegram was most welcome because we had received one just before unofficially saying that he had been killed, and it was many hours after that the official telegram reached us from the War Office. It was not known at that time by us that it was Douglas who had taken the trouble to let us know.

It is a curious thing that neither my sister Violet, Vivian nor I knew Colonel Haig, although he commanded my brother's regiment, but we were given to understand that he was rather a woman-hater, and on the day of this match I was more than ever anxious for my brother to introduce me to his Colonel, but he only laughed at my presumption. Meanwhile, Douglas had been made Inspector-General of Cavalry in India and had been out there for two years.

I cannot tell exactly how he received an invitation from King Edward to stay at Windsor Castle for Ascot in June 1905, but it was evident that his invitation only reached him shortly before Ascot week. On this occasion I was fortunate



Haig

Carew

Lawley

Hone

POLO TEAM 7TH HUSSARS, 1887



## ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE

in being selected to be one of the Maids of Honour. The Royal party usually went to Windsor Castle the week-end before their invited guests arrived, and I was taken in to dinner on the Sunday by Colonel Frederick, the Deputy Master of the Household. He seemed very much worried that his careful arrangements had been rather spoilt owing to the King having invited another guest only a few days before. It was difficult to fit him in and yet leave unaltered lists that were already printed. Colonel Frederick asked whether I had met the expected extra guest, General Haig, and remarked that he had commanded my brother's regiment. He was surprised to hear that I had not met him. On the first evening (Monday) Douglas took the other Maid of Honour in to dinner and I sat opposite them. It was not until Thursday evening that we were introduced, when it was decreed that we should play golf together.

During Ascot week it had always been the custom for guests who wanted to play golf after the races to change hurriedly and get a game in before dinner. I loved to play and always tried to get a game. I had arranged on Thursday to play with one of the household, but etiquette obliged anyone in attendance, like myself, not to play until all the guests had started. Douglas was standing at the first tee waiting for the Prince of Wales (King George) when a message came that the Prince had been detained and a foursome was made up in which Douglas was detailed to play with me. I cannot remember who played with the Duke of Devonshire against us, but I have a vivid recollection of the Duke getting into every bunker on the course and finding great difficulty in getting out of them. As a result, Douglas and I had to wait and make polite conversation to each other. I naturally questioned him about his life and work in India, but he seemed rather impatient because time was getting on, and kept pulling out a beautiful gold watch which I noticed particularly and about which I

made some remark. This watch was given to him by his mother to give to his future wife. I thought that Douglas had not really enjoyed his game, for the long wait had been trying, but as we walked back to the castle he asked me to play a single with him next morning. He spent all the time with me at the races that day and took me in to dinner and asked me to play golf with him again the following day.

On Saturday morning we meant to play golf before breakfast as arranged, but to my surprise Douglas did not wish to play and paid off the caddies. We looked for a quiet seat but not finding one he blurted out, "I must propose to you standing!" This was very abrupt and I must say quite unexpected, but I accepted him.

There was now a complication because we wished to let Queen Alexandra know at once about our engagement, but she had not yet come down and Douglas had to leave the castle as already arranged with the other guests. We therefore took into our confidence General Brocklehurst (equerry to His Majesty), of whom we were both very fond, and he very kindly undertook to let the Queen know as soon as possible. He could not help expressing his surprise at such a sudden engagement and thought at first that Douglas was referring to my sister. Meanwhile Miss Charlotte Knollys (private secretary to Her Majesty) had seen Douglas and myself hurrying home very late for breakfast and apparently rather interested in each other, and had become somewhat suspicious. She had, I believe, already hinted about it to the Queen before General Brocklehurst gave the news. Queen Alexandra, however, was delighted and sent Miss Knollys at once to me with her warm congratulations.

Douglas left to stay with his sister Jenty at Ascot, and his brother John has given me the following account, which explains what took place there.



DOUGLAS AND HENRIETTA, 1887





## ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE

"Douglas arrived from Windsor Castle to stay with Jenty and on the way as arranged beforehand he lunched at Sunningdale Golf Club. In the afternoon we played a foursome, Douglas and me against Jim Oldham and Harvey Thomas. We were thoroughly enjoying our game and had just reached the road between the thirteenth and fourteenth holes when I was accosted by a mounted orderly who asked for Douglas. He had ridden from Windsor round Ascot calling at Jenty's house. The orderly brought a letter ordering Douglas back to Windsor Castle. Douglas left without giving us any information as to the cause of this abrupt change of plans. I heard from him afterwards the news of his engagement, and that, on his return, he had been much chaffed by the household, and the King's first words to him were, 'What do you mean coming to my house and trying to take away one of the Queen's best Maids of Honour?'"

The orderly carried a note from General Brocklehurst with an invitation from King Edward asking Douglas to return to Windsor Castle for the week-end. Before Douglas's return I was sent for by the King, who, after congratulating me, spoke many appreciative words about Douglas, both as a man and a soldier. The King, however, became very serious, and asked me to promise him that I would do my utmost not to interfere with the military work of his "best and most capable General". His Majesty also impressed on me that we must keep the secret until my mother Lady Vivian's permission had been asked for.

It was with some difficulty that Douglas and I succeeded in not letting the week-end party guests realise what had happened, and Douglas was obliged to play bridge every evening with some ladies to whom he had already lost a certain sum of money, but all the household combined to try and let us be together as much as possible, and Sir

Dighton Probyn insisted on our using his private garden, where we could be undisturbed.

Queen Alexandra enjoyed the whole thing almost as much as we did, and thought that things would be made easier if she wrote a letter to my mother for Douglas to take when he had to break the news and ask her permission for the marriage.

It was usual for the guests staying to leave before the Royal Family and household, and Douglas left early on Monday morning by train for London. He went straight to my mother's house. She at first, not liking to see strangers, refused to give him an interview, but finding that he would not go, she was obliged to see him, and from what my sister, who was there, told me afterwards, the meeting must have been very amusing, because Douglas simply blurted out at once what he had come to see her about.

During my engagement Queen Alexandra did everything she could think of to make things easy for us, and insisted on my remaining in waiting until my wedding day. I had a very gay time then, because the Queen went out almost every night to one of the big London dinners, balls or réceptions, and Douglas came for a short time to some of them. We had much difficulty in getting the date of the wedding fixed, but the Queen helped us by arranging for our wedding to be at Buckingham Palace, and she suggested to one of her other Maids of Honour, Mary Dyke, that she be married at the same time. Mary had for some time been engaged to Captain Bell of the Rifle Brigade, and the Queen, with her motherly instinct towards the Maids of Honour attached to her personal household, had been distressed that the arrangements had gone no further. The Queen asked the permission of their respective parents that the marriage of this young couple might be on the same day as mine, and the joint wedding took place on Tuesday, July 11th,



ON HIS GREY PONY, SOUTH AFRICA



1905, at the Private Chapel, Buckingham Palace, according to the Queen's desire.

After the ceremony at Buckingham Palace our parents gave the usual receptions—my mother at her house, 27 Chesham Place. This reception lasted so long that, instead of going by train, as Douglas had arranged, we decided to motor to Radway Grange, Warwickshire, for our honeymoon. I was ridiculously dressed for a journey of any kind—in white coat, dress and hat—so Douglas took me to his sister Henrietta Jameson's house, 21 Princes Gate, and rigged me up hurriedly in an old ulster and cap of his. On our way to Radway we passed through Oxford, and Douglas showed me the rooms he used to occupy when at Brasenose College. The undergraduates were on vacation, and the whole place and rooms looked very desolate and deserted, but Douglas enjoyed recalling the many happy days he had spent there.

By the time we got to our destination, it was long past our usual dinner hour, and Douglas, thinking it would be quicker, stopped the motor and we walked by a short cut across the woods and fields to the house. He explained to me that there was a rather formidable fence to climb, and that he would help me over it, but he did not know that the village had been decorated in our honour and that the villagers were waiting to receive us. The empty car drove under the archway of flowers, and the villagers, hearing from the chauffeur what had happened, rushed to the front of the house waving flags and cheering. I had to negotiate the fence in the old ulster and cap, and did not feel very happy in front of such an audience. Douglas was very sorry for me, and *damned* the old parson for not letting him know about this reception. The next day was spent in putting right this unfortunate incident. Douglas had only two weeks' leave before we were due to sail for India, and during this time we amused ourselves by riding about the country-

## THE MAN I KNEW

side. Douglas insisted on providing me with a complete new outfit of clothes, suitable for the climate of India and everyday life there. My "essentially London clothes" were left at Princes Gate for future wear on any occasion that we might be visiting London again.

Both Douglas and I received many delightful letters of congratulation, of which there are too many to quote from, but we both appreciated especially the following which I received:

34 PORTLAND PLACE,  
LONDON, W.  
*June 30, 05*

DEAR MISS VIVIAN,

Will you think me intrusive if I write you a line of very warm congratulation on your engagement? When we were labouring in 1901-2 I used to hear from returning officers one chorus of panegyric of the ideal staff officer, who from the first had made the reputation of his chiefs, and I always knew whose name would follow the preamble. I do not suppose there is a more popular, appreciated or successful officer in the Army, and I wish you joy with all my heart.

Yours v. truly,

ST. JOHN BRODRICK

## CHAPTER IV

### INDIA

1905-1906





## CHAPTER IV

### INDIA

DOUGLAS's sister Henrietta came for a week to Radway Grange, and we stayed a few days at Princes Gate, her London house, before starting for India. Henrietta travelled with us to Paris and saw us off for Marseilles. She felt her brother's marriage keenly, but Douglas tried to tell and show her that things between them would be unaltered. Poor devoted sister, I was too young then to appreciate what my husband's marriage meant to her, and sadly she stood waving good-bye as the train took us off. Douglas and I were so happy getting away, just we two, that I fear at the time we thought only of ourselves.

We arrived at Marseilles in plenty of time for a good breakfast, but like all women I began fussing about my luggage, which was stupid of me, because on arriving on the boat, Secrett (my husband's batman) had arranged our bags. He knew exactly what was required of him, having travelled so much with his master. The *Ville de la Ciotat* (Messagerie Line) was most comfortable, and all on board, especially the captain, showed us much kindness. He had arranged for our comfort two adjoining cabins and another for our luggage. Being August, there were few travellers, and we could enjoy ourselves without having to take part in organised amusements. One passenger who rather amused us was a priest who seemed somewhat shocked each time we passed him on deck, often hand in hand, but he was a kindly soul. We shared at meals a table with a Judge and his wife who both could only talk French. Douglas loved watching the lady's appetite and especially her liking for ices.

## THE MAN I KNEW

We were lucky the first day to see an eclipse of the sun, which at sea was a curious sight. At first it was rough, but both being good sailors this did not worry us, and the heat, which Douglas had dreaded for me, was never oppressive, electric fans greatly helping to keep the air moving. I will not mention the various places that we passed as so many have made the voyage to India, but on arrival at Port Said, Douglas sent a wire to Henrietta telling her that we had both been thinking of her.

We reached Bombay on September the 13th, and were met by a friend of Douglas's, John Vaughan. After being introduced, he took us to the Taj Mahal Hotel, where rooms had been reserved. It was very surprising to a newcomer like myself to find such a luxurious place to stay at, but the heat was terrific and we could not sleep. Sir Pertab Singh called on Douglas in the afternoon. He was a dear old man and insisted on our being his guests at the hotel. He and Douglas had played many a game of polo together. In riding clothes he did not look imposing, but in the evening when we dined together he was very gorgeous in rich embroideries and bejewelled turban, which Douglas explained to me he had put on to do honour to us.

We left for Simla on the 15th and found that the railway company had arranged for our comfort a special compartment with cooking carriage attached, so our journey was a very pleasant one. Whilst we were at dinner a telegram arrived from Lord Kitchener inviting us to stay at Snowdon as long as we liked. Douglas was very touched by this kindness, but decided to keep on the rooms which he had taken at the hotel. He wanted me to have somewhere to go to when the time came for him to leave me alone. We reached Kulu on the 17th and drove in a landau to Simla, Douglas explaining that this was a special concession instead of a tonga usually used by travellers. At that time only the Viceroy and the C.-in-C. used carriages at Simla, others

went about in rickshaws when not riding. Lord Kitchener's private carriage met us at the tonga terminus. Major Marker received us at Snowdon, Lord Kitchener being still away on tour, and we found luxurious quarters prepared for us; we dined alone and had the next day to be together, Lord Kitchener arriving with his staff in time for lunch on the 19th.

The prospect of meeting our host had been rather alarming me, for he had the name of being somewhat hard and severe, and I could see that Douglas was nervous as to how we would get on, particularly as I was the first lady invited to stay by Lord Kitchener. Douglas remarked many times that Kitchener was not at his best with women, not being accustomed to their society and that he would be gauche and shy with me. But I knew this already, having seen him made a lion of society in London just after the South African War, and it was obvious how much he hated it. However, Lord Kitchener had his likings of the female sex too, and many comments had then been made about a certain lady, whom he evidently wanted to marry, but nothing came of it. History does not relate whether it was Lord Kitchener himself or the lady in question who was responsible for the marriage not taking place.

The arrival caused a great stir and Douglas called me to come down, and there stood the great man, towering over his staff and quite devoid of words. However, the luncheon quite broke down my nervousness and I found him most human and considerate during the whole of our visit. At that time the Kitchener-Curzon trouble was in full swing, but Lord Kitchener did not mention anything about it before me. He had, however, got what he wanted and therefore there was no reason for him to feel aggrieved. We played billiards when not out in the evenings and it was amusing to see how Lord Kitchener liked to be on the winning side!

## THE MAN I KNEW

The time was drawing near for Douglas to start his inspections, and we therefore moved into the Cecil Hotel on September the 23rd with the intention of my settling in before being left alone. I was rather flattered that a few days before we left Lord Kitchener asked me to push about his furniture in his drawing-room because he felt it wanted a feminine hand. But I was too nervous to do so, because I knew what an expert our host was and that he had a lot of valuable china which I might have broken. He had been collecting for years and bargaining in bazaars and with Indians for Japanese and Chinese bowls, of which he had a great number. He thought each piece to be priceless, but unfortunately for him, a short time before, he had invited an American expert to stay with him and value each piece. Douglas told me that he had been much upset because after going through them the guest remarked that only a few were genuine.

Lord Kitchener too was very fond of decorating and doing up places. Just then he was supervising the carving of wood in the ballroom at Snowdon. Bit by bit he would select designs to be utilised, and spent every spare moment watching the work being done by Indian craftsmen. I found him one day there and was very interested when he confided to me that his ambition when young was to be an architect but that circumstances had driven him to another career. He remarked that when the time came for him to retire from the army, he intended to buy an old house and to do it up, retaining the beauty of its antiquity.

I remember many an officer mentioning at the time to me, that being so newly married, it was thought that Douglas would curtail his duties, but I heard afterwards that he had covered the country far more thoroughly than in previous years, which I think was somewhat of a disappointment to the elderly gentlemen not fond of riding; in fact some

of them returned to Simla almost unable to sit down as a result of their unaccustomed exercise on horseback.

After our move to the hotel, Douglas began life in India for the first time as a married man. During the early mornings we rode a great deal to exercise his many ponies, and in the afternoon rode to Annandale, where Douglas would play a chukker or two of polo. At night we dined out a good deal, our first dinner being at Viceregal Lodge. Douglas sat next to Lady Curzon and myself on the right of the Viceroy. Both were most kind, Lady Curzon rather especially, for she insisted that after Douglas's departure I should go and stay with them. We went on to a dance given by Mr. Nathan, the Viceroy's private secretary. Many farewell parties were given to Their Excellencies at that time. On their arrival Their Excellencies were received by their host under an archway of flowers, and the ballroom and other rooms were decorated with masses of every kind of flowering creeper. It was evident that Mr. Nathan wanted to show his appreciation of Lord and Lady Curzon. There was a lot of formality about how we should go in to supper, and to my surprise I found myself again on the right of the Viceroy. I learnt afterwards that a bride on first coming to India is treated for one year as the guest of honour and placed at the top of a very exact list as to the seating of guests. His Excellency talked a lot to those around him and expressed very openly his personal disgust at the way he had been treated by both Lord Kitchener and the Government at home. On the other hand, Lady Curzon asked most kindly after Lord Kitchener and mentioned that she had liked him very much.

I want to point out here Douglas's extraordinary patience in dining out every night, and staying up late at dances to please me. As a bachelor, he had rarely dined out (which he did not mention to me, but I heard so from others), and certainly he did not go near balls, especially as he could not

dance. But after taking him several times into this giddy throng, and dancing hard myself till late, because I loved it, in the early hours of one morning, when I saw him sitting in his red uniform and looking so handsome—and hiding so well his boredom—it occurred to me what I was doing, and I remembered King Edward's kind warning about his military career. From that day onwards, I feel rather proud that I avoided staying late again, pretending that I was sick of meeting the same people night after night, though I had my good fling when alone. At first Douglas was rather suspicious, and kept persuading me at dances to stay late, but I managed to mislead him, and it is now my great consolation to realise that I showed him *some* unselfishness. From the day that we married, his unselfishness to me was so outstanding that I fear it led to my not always fully realising how much he was sacrificing himself for me then and always and afterwards for his children.

Douglas left on the 2nd of October and I felt quite lost without him. He wrote most days, and I was interested to read many years after in his diary of that time that he was receiving two or three letters from me every day.

At Viceregal Lodge life was very gay and I was thrown into the hurly-burly of balls, dinners, gymkanas, etc. etc. My host and hostess could not have been kinder although they were so busy packing up to leave India. His Excellency was rather alarming, having a habit of asking rather sarcastic questions round the dinner-table, and as each of our turns came, we trembled. There was a very outstanding difference between him and my previous host, Lord Kitchener. The latter was a silent man, with his mind full of military plans, shy in society and forbidding by his indifference to conversation around him, whilst Lord Curzon, a much cleverer man, never ceased talking and loved display and admirers round him. I could not help being amused at the pomp carried on, even when there were no outside guests. I had, though alone,

## INDIA

to go so many steps forward as the Viceroy came down and make my curtsy in the same formal way as at large parties.

Meanwhile Lord Kitchener had been away all the time on tour, feeling that it was the wisest thing to do under such difficult circumstances. But the day arrived for Their Excellencies' departure, and there was much excitement as to whether the two men would shake hands or whether Lord Kitchener would be there at all. The photographer, thinking the situation such an interesting one, had focussed his camera to where the hand-shaking would take place. I am glad to say that Lord Kitchener was there to say good-bye and that both men put out their hands simultaneously for the formal leave-taking. These gaieties helped me through the lonely time without Douglas, and he returned on the 28th, after much strenuous travelling. Lord Kitchener sent for him at once, rather to my disappointment; but the interview was apparently very satisfactory. Lord Kitchener gave Douglas a free hand in making all arrangements for the review to be held at Pindi during the Prince and Princess of Wales's forthcoming visit there.

The move was beginning from Simla to the Plains and on November 9th we left for Meerut where Douglas had taken a bungalow which he had chosen for a halting-spot, being a very convenient centre for train services. It was rather a change from the gaieties of Simla, but certainly pleasanter, and we saw a great deal of the officers of the 17th Lancers, and their wives. Although Douglas had all his polo ponies there and would have enjoyed playing with the officers of his old regiment, he spent much of his time away from Meerut. On December 2nd he took me with him to Pindi for the manoeuvres and review in honour of the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales. I stayed with Sir Bindon and Lady Blood. Douglas was in camp. My host and hostess were both charming and I enjoyed being with them. The

## THE MAN I KNEW

manœuvres passed off well, and the review, in which over fifty thousand troops took part, was a very wonderful sight, especially the cavalry galloping past, finally charging seemingly straight at us and stopping suddenly a few yards from us.

We spent Christmas quietly together at Meerut, and after a few days Douglas started again on his journeys. Whilst on tour he sent me some letters from his sister and others which indicated an early return to England. I decided therefore to see a little of the country and travelled alone with my ayah, visiting Calcutta, Lucknow and Agra. I found on arrival at Calcutta that the Prince and Princess of Wales were expected there, and as I had a kind of invitation from Lord Kitchener to dine with them, I stayed on longer than I had intended.

I must tell here rather a funny little story about the difficulties of dressing oneself. In those days dresses were very tight, and evening gowns almost impossible for ayahs to fasten. Ayahs have rather cold, clammy hands. Neither could they help with the hairdressing, which at that time was an art, the hair being worn on top of the head either back-combed or with horse-hair stuffing added. I instructed my ayah to practise on the patent hooks of those days (horrible things which were like the hook we use now but had to be pinched to fasten), and arranged with a hairdresser to do my hair, because I intended wearing a tiara which had been given me by Queen Alexandra and which was not easy to fix on top of the mountain of hair. Time went on, but no hairdresser arrived, so I started putting on my dress, but the ayah had broken most of the hooks and there was much delay in getting these replaced. Still no hairdresser! so in despair I did the best I could, but when the tiara was at last on I found that I had forgotten my hair-net, so just put it over tiara and all. The streets were so crowded that I was somewhat late, in fact the last to arrive.



## INDIA

The Prince reprimanded me, and alas! at once noticed the hair-net, at which he laughed heartily. He must have been particularly amused as, later, when we returned to England, I called on my twin sister, then in waiting as Maid of Honour at Buckingham Palace, and for the occasion had turned myself out quite smartly, wearing most of my jewellery, and feeling rather superior as a married woman, but I was soon put into my place, because my sister had heard about the hair-net—in fact the Prince had told her himself.

Many years before my brother had written in my album this ridiculous poem, which seems rather appropriate to quote here.

A pair of twins there were, whose looks  
So very different were;  
One thought of dresses, earls and “dooks”  
And also of her hair.

The other had a simpler taste,  
Untidiness was rife,  
She cared not for the “lotion-paste”  
Which some say makes a wife.

A sage then said with air divine,  
How better far ’twould be,  
Each other’s thoughts to intertwine  
A medium thus we’d see.

VIVIAN.

Rome, *Feb. 7th*, 1899.

Neither of us had liked it at the time, my sister because of “the earls and dooks”, and myself because of the “untidiness”.

Whilst on the question of dresses, I must tell one more story.

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After a large dinner-party several ladies with me were discussing our experiences in getting ayahs to fasten the terrible patent hooks. One of them, rather a gaunt female, announced that she could get into her evening dress alone in a few minutes. There was a hush and then eager enquiries as to how this could be done, and the reply came, "I pull my dress to the front, fasten the hooks, turn it round and push my arms in". There was a silence, each wondering how this could be accomplished, and the bright idea came to me, which I put to her, whether she had elastic shoulder-straps. But the angry look I got stopped all further conversation on the matter.

I must also pay a tribute to my husband for the patient way in which he helped me to dress at Simla. He would allow time, after dressing himself, to fasten the devilish hooks. At first he was rather clumsy and fumbled a bit, but after a few days he soon mastered the job.

Whilst Douglas was on tour towards the end of March, 1906, the rumours of our return to England were confirmed by a letter from Sir Neville Lyttelton (Chief of Staff at the War Office) offering Douglas the appointment of Director of Training, which he accepted. He wrote to me and suggested that I should join him at Peshawar and see the Khyber Pass, and thence go on to Pindi, where we had again been invited to stay with the Bloods. There was a little confusion as to when Douglas was to take on his new duties at the War Office, and therefore we adhered to our plans, which had been arranged for some time, to return early in April to Simla, where we had taken a bungalow at Mashobra, a few miles from Simla. We had decided on Mashobra so as to avoid the many gaieties in Simla, especially as latterly Douglas had been having too many attacks of malaria fever, unfortunately of the tertian type, which took a lot out of him. We enjoyed the quiet time, riding to his office in Simla in the morning, playing tennis and camping out every

week-end at Naldera for golf. We did not have the honour of seeing much of Lord and Lady Minto, though they were very kindly anxious for us to lunch or dine. We accepted one invitation to dine and sleep the night when they were giving a dance, and we both enjoyed the change.

During this time Douglas was having constant correspondence with the authorities at home as to when he was expected at the War Office, and answers to his letters were so confused that he decided to ask Lord Kitchener's leave to take a holiday in April before taking on his new work. We left early in May, arriving on June 1st in London, where Henrietta met us and took us to stay at Princes Gate. The following press account shows what was thought of the fitness of Douglas's new appointment.

### *Press Cutting.*

The appointment of Major-General Douglas Haig as Director of Military Training at Headquarters has given the greatest satisfaction to the mounted branches of the Army. The Cavalry Committee established at Aldershot does much excellent work, but its functions are more restricted than is commonly supposed. It does not influence policy, its duties being mainly confined to details of equipment and like matters. If it were not that Sir John French is a fearless champion of the cavalry, and that in Ireland and elsewhere there are cavalry officers of uncommon energy and enthusiasm, the cavalry of the British Army would not now be in the excellent state in which we see it. The force has not hitherto been adequately represented at headquarters, but the authorities have now a great opportunity before them. There is an abundance of keen and earnest young cavalry officers with all the experience of South Africa behind them. When Mr. Haldane gives practical effect to the General Staff, which he soon must do, he should hasten to include not a few of our talented cavalry officers in its composition. It was an encouraging sign that an eminent cavalry officer like General Haig has been given an important appointment at headquarters, but strong cavalry representation in the counsels of the War Office would have prevented some errors being made in the recent past. Recruiting for the cavalry was suspended too long, in order to benefit the infantry, and the result

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has been that our cavalry regiments have in many instances been short of men, while horses have been more than adequate in number. What is required is that the cavalry arm of the Service shall have a proper recognition at headquarters and its interest shall receive the consideration it well deserves. The transfer of an officer on promotion from the infantry to the Royal Dragoons recently was an event which placed in a strong light the disadvantage to which the cavalry are yet subject. It has caused some strong feeling, and we hope it may give a warning to Mr. Haldane. The matter requires to be further explained for the reply in the House of Commons explains nothing.

CHAPTER V  
AT WAR OFFICE AS DIRECTOR OF MILITARY  
TRAINING

1906-1907



## CHAPTER V

### AT WAR OFFICE AS DIRECTOR OF MILITARY TRAINING

ON our arrival, Douglas decided at once to give his services to the War Office, although no date had been definitely fixed as to when he was to take over his new duties. We had not had time to make plans and Henrietta, wishing to help us, insisted on our staying with her and her husband at 21 Princes Gate.

Immediately after we arrived Their Majesties the King and Queen sent a very kind invitation asking us to stay at Windsor Castle. This we looked forward to, having become engaged to be married there a year before, and we would see again, besides Their Majesties, who had always been so good to us, many real friends amongst the gentlemen and ladies-in-waiting, especially Miss Charlotte Knollys and Sir Dighton Probyn.

We arrived at Windsor on the 6th of June and found ourselves in one of the best suites in the Palace. We were greeted most warmly by Their Majesties, who were rather late in coming in from some function so dinner was postponed to nine o'clock.

Douglas was delighted because the Queen remarked to him at dinner that I was looking so much better, and my hair well turned out. Evidently I was more skilful than the maids of old!

Queen Alexandra was looking as lovely as ever, and the King showed us much kindness and was greatly interested in what Douglas told him about India. We stayed three days and were both very much chaffed over our hasty engagement and the golf match when we first met. We

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played golf every day, and on the 8th the Queen took us in her motor back to London.

On June 9th Henrietta and Willie sailed for America, and we were left in charge at Princes Gate. Douglas motored down that day to stay with General French (C.-in-C., Aldershot), where he first made the acquaintance of Mr. Haldane, and at once struck up a friendship which was to continue right through the time that they worked so closely together in forming the Territorial Army. In fact Douglas told me when he came back that they had been so engrossed in their conversation that they suddenly found themselves caught in a bog!

Two days later Mr. Haldane and Douglas travelled back to London to attend a conference at the War Office on the formation of the Territorial Army. Again the next day Douglas went to another meeting called the "Duma", and I think that he then realised the difficulties that would have to be overcome, officers of the Yeomanry being rather opposed to the scheme, while those forming the Committee of the "Duma" held many divergent views.

These meetings at the War Office continued daily, and Douglas was much engrossed with the work, but I could not help feeling rather worried, and thought that after his strenuous work in India and the many bouts of malaria he had had, I would have preferred to see him taking a quiet holiday with me.

But it was an enjoyable time; many of Douglas's old friends came to dine with us: officers who had been on his staff during the South African War, in the 17th Lancers, polo friends and those he was then daily meeting at the War Office. The latter, however, were too fond of discussing, after dinner, the work they had been doing during the day. I used to tease Douglas about this, saying he ought to leave "shop talk" alone, and take a rest. I can see them in my mind so well, Colonel Ellison and others, standing



in front of the fire discussing their different problems, and I am ashamed to say that often, not being able to join in the conversation, I would go fast asleep and wake up after midnight to find them still at it—but none had noticed my lack of manners, being so absorbed in what they were talking about.

It was now about the middle of June, and yet nothing had been settled as to the date Douglas was to take on his new duties officially, and he was somewhat hurt on receiving a letter from the Army Council informing him that the £1500 per year now being received by General Stopford (still holding the post of Director of Training) would be in future reduced to £1200. Douglas could not understand such niggardly treatment, especially as instead of taking leave, he was doing what he could to help Mr. Haldane, and the latter was continually thanking him for his valuable assistance. Later, however, Douglas ascertained that the letter had been sent without the knowledge of Mr. Haldane, who promised to see that he would receive the pay to which he was entitled.

I persuaded Douglas after this to take a short holiday at Aldeburgh, where I had enjoyed staying before I married. We played golf every day for a week, and he returned to London feeling much better. But again all the hard work and meetings at the War Office were telling on his health, and while we were staying with General French at Aldershot early in July Douglas suddenly developed a very acute attack of malaria which was most alarming.

We returned at once to Princes Gate and sent for Sir Lauder Brunton, whom Douglas had known and liked in old days. After examining him, Sir Lauder found that owing to the persistent attacks of malaria his liver was much enlarged, and he insisted that it was necessary for him to go away at once and advised his taking a course of waters and

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baths at Tarasp. But it was difficult for me to get Douglas to go, because he was determined to see the first part of the proposed Territorial Army ready for others to carry on in his absence. I was only able to get him to start his cure ten days after Sir Lauder Brunton's advice. Unfortunately, I was not able to accompany him owing to my own state of health. His cure lasted a month and he wrote me daily, telling me all about his walks, the waters and baths, and the people he met there. Amongst many others he had taken a great liking for Mr. Leopold Rothschild, with whom he shared a table at the hotel. Finishing his cure at Pontresina, he arrived back on August 24th.

During his absence he had again been annoyed at a letter received from the Finance Department of the War Office, refusing to allow him his pay from August 11th, the date that General Stopford vacated the appointment of Director of Training. He therefore took up his duties officially on August 24th, and still found many difficulties to overcome in connection with the Territorial Army. Mr. Haldane saw this at once and gave him a free hand to form his own committee, and promised to make a point of attending these meetings at any time Douglas might want him.

After a few days at Princes Gate, we decided that London was not a good place for us. Douglas had always been accustomed to an early morning ride and found London at that time very airless. We decided, therefore, to look out for a small house which we could occupy until we found something more suitable, and we selected Coombe Farm, Farnborough, which was close to the station.

At last after much hard work Mr. Haldane's scheme for the reorganisation of the Army, with which the Territorial scheme was embodied, was approved of by the House of Commons (February 17th, 1907).

On March 9th my eldest daughter was born at 21 Princes Gate. Queen Alexandra and those with whom I had been

in waiting, wrote me at the time many delightful letters, and the Queen consented to be the child's godmother. The christening took place on April 26th at the Chapel Royal and the following press account came out.

*Press Cutting.*

The Queen again showed her great interest in Mrs. Douglas Haig, by being sponsor to her first child at the christening of the infant on Wednesday at the Chapel Royal, St. James's. As Miss Dorothy Vivian, Mrs. Haig was a favourite maid of honour to Her Majesty, and it was by the royal wish that her marriage to Major-General Douglas Haig, and that of Miss Mary Dyke to Captain Bell, took place the season before last at the Private Chapel at Buckingham Palace. The child received the names of Alexandra Henrietta Louisa and the sponsors were Mrs. W. G. Jameson, the Duchess of Buccleuch and Mr. Walter Warwick Vivian, and the Queen, who was represented by Lady Emily Kingscote.

We returned to Farnborough directly I was fit to get up, and Douglas continued his busy life, riding before breakfast and leaving early by train for the War Office. At night I did not know what time to expect him. He never seemed able to tear himself away from work in London and often we had dinner as late as 9 P.M.

We had been searching some time for a little house to furnish and live in, and at last decided on Trunk House, Cove, into which we moved on December 9th. Douglas was very pleased that I took only one day to settle in. Many officers from the War Office came down to spend the weekend, and amongst them Colonel Ellison, Military Secretary to Mr. Haldane, who with Douglas and Mr. Haldane did most of the work for the organisation of the Territorial Army.

I feel that I must mention here an episode in connection with General M——. As will be remembered by many who knew the General, he was rather an obstructionist to the Territorial Army scheme and had raised many difficulties

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that had caused Douglas a lot of anxiety and annoyance before he had managed to clear them all away. Actually, away from the War Office, General M—— and Douglas were the best of friends, and after our return to Farnborough Douglas brought him to stay the week-end at Trunk House. After all I had heard about the General I expected to find him a strong well-set-up soldier-like man. I suppose I must have formed this idea from the fact that everyone seemed to be rather afraid of him. However he was not the least as I had pictured him. Instead he was quiet and mild looking; much more like a university professor than a military general.

I was not down to breakfast on Sunday morning, because I was still in the doctor's hands, but soon after I went into the drawing-room. I was then rather proud of the newly furnished house. To my horror I noticed that someone had thrown on our best drawing-room carpet the yolk of an egg. Without taking the trouble to look closely at the thing, I rushed into the dining-room, where the two men were still at breakfast, and asked Douglas what he had been doing, and explained what I had found. Douglas replied, "Ask M——", and I turned on the wretched man and he had a bad time. Douglas was quite delighted, and enjoyed the scene thoroughly. After a little time, Douglas explained that to amuse me he had bought a novelty from Hamley's, and he then took me along to pick it up. We often met General M—— in a friendly way afterwards, and enjoyed this joke, General M—— himself thoroughly appreciating that without provocation I had given him the dressing down which he often so richly deserved from Douglas.

About that time Douglas attended a very important conference at the Colonial Office, which was held to inaugurate a new scheme which he had suggested to Mr. Haldane, namely, to create an Imperial General Staff at the War Office, in place of the present General Staff there. The scheme was

## AT WAR OFFICE AS DIRECTOR OF MILITARY TRAINING

devised to improve the co-operation of the War Office with our colonial troops and in that way make our forces more Imperial. Douglas remarked that Mr. Haldane made an excellent speech and that the representatives of the various colonies present were much impressed and agreed to the plan being carried out. Still the difficulties over Territorial formations continued, and at the same time Douglas began working out how best the proposed Imperial General Staff could be formed.

At that time he found it necessary to inspect many Artillery Camps so that he might observe the various units at practice and see that the proper methods of training were being applied and carried out. This work very naturally took him away from the War Office a great deal, for which I was rather glad. The constant attendance at the War Office must have been very trying to him and indeed I was beginning to feel anxious concerning his health. I do not know whether it was being so much indoors and not getting enough exercise or whether it was just that he was over anxious about matters on which he was working, but certainly his health was being seriously impaired, and his frequent visits to the training camps helped considerably to enable him to stave off the threatened return of the malaria.

On June 25th Douglas went to stay with Lord Tullibardine at Dunkeld House and later with Mr. Haldane at Cloan, Auchterarder, for some manoeuvres. After his return we decided to go together to Tarasp so as to make certain of no return of malaria, and we left for there on July 17th. It was rather a wrench to leave baby, particularly as I had a nurse who, though very capable at her work, was somewhat interfering and quarrelsome with the other servants, but I tried to ensure that nothing would happen, and asked my relations to keep an eye on the child during our absence. We enjoyed very much the beautiful scenery and walks at

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Tarasps and took assiduously our waters and baths. There was rather a tiresome doctor there who wanted to extract all my teeth (this craze was very prevalent then), but I refused to allow him to take them out. Douglas's were too sound to be criticised, but he was rather worried about mine. We stopped a few days at Pontresina and returned to Trunk House to find baby looking very well, but received notice from the three servants who formed our household at that time with Secrett, my husband's servant, who remained with him till a year before his death.

Besides continuing his work at the War Office, Douglas then returned to a book he had been putting together for publication, *Cavalry Studies*, which embodied some schemes he had used whilst Inspector-General of Cavalry in India. The book was considered of great interest, especially by officers in the German Army. I give one letter that he received from a German officer:

I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance before you went out to India in 1903, when I was ordered to the English manœuvres near Marlborough. With great pleasure I have read your *Cavalry Studies* and think it would be a good thing to show other people something of the contents of your most interesting book. I am sorry that I have not enough spare time to translate the whole book into German. For this reason I wrote a short extract of the contents of your book for the *Militär-Wochenblatt*, but I would not give it to the editor's office without having asked your allowance. Therefore I sent the telegram of yesterday. I gave my general, the general-inspector of our cavalry—General der Kavallerie von Kleist—a short description of your opinions about the handling of cavalry in modern wars, and he was very much interested and highly pleased with most of your principles. A few days ago I met Major v. Fleydebreyk of the general staff, who told me that he had seen you during the last manœuvres in England and wished me to express his kindest regards.

I was then finding Trunk House very lonely. No one from Farnborough or Aldershot had called on me, due, I

suppose, to our not being there in any official capacity, so for a change Douglas allowed me to go with him to some manœuvres at Leighton Buzzard. Mr. and Mrs. Leopold Rothschild, Douglas's friend of Tarasp, had kindly asked us both to stay. I saw Douglas in a new light there. At heart, he really did not like me being at manœuvres, although there was a whole party of ladies staying with the Rothschilds. He had purposely taken a horse for me to ride, but when I met him out with the troops and dared to go and speak to him, he just looked at me as if he had never seen me before. His blue eyes, which were usually so kind, took on a steely, hard look which quite alarmed me. He was altogether too military! The other highly placed officers, however, were most kind when I went and talked to them.

The following is rather an amusing episode which occurred during this visit and is typical of the German Staff officer of the day. The story loses much in the telling because the whole thing is so ridiculous.

On our arrival at Ascot we had tea and went round the gardens. Mrs. Leopold Rothschild mentioned in conversation that she had been asked by the War Office to invite some German officers who were to be treated with special civility, as it was the intention to restrict their activities during the manœuvres. She then asked me to make myself particularly agreeable at dinner, because one of these officers was to take me in. I thought him extremely common, but tried to carry out what had been asked of me, apparently so successfully that during dinner he became very drunk and proceeded to make love openly, daring to call me "Süsse Doris", much to the amusement of the whole party. After dinner I hoped that the creature would not come near me again, but to my extreme discomfort he lurched across to where I was sitting and openly asked me to go into another room. We all laughed and there were many jokes,

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perhaps more so because Douglas took it all so calmly and even politely answered the man when he spoke to him.

The following morning we got up very early to see the finish of the night operations, and we were all having breakfast when the wretched man began addressing me in the same familiar way—evidently still drunk. In the evening the creature discovered where my bedroom was and sat in the garden under my window, looking up. I complained to the German attaché, who himself was a gentleman and much liked in London. He was ashamed of his brother officer's behaviour and let him know at once what he thought of him. I had no more trouble, but the story was too good not to be talked about and I had to put up with a lot of chaff. The German officer was in no way ashamed of himself, and Douglas continued to show him polite courtesy and did not join in the general amusement, which really saved the situation. The officer afterwards showed his appreciation of this by sending Douglas his photograph!

After our stay at Ascot Douglas went on to other manœuvres, but I returned to Trunk House. Later I joined him for a shooting-party at Stowlangtoft, a shooting place which Willie and Henrietta had rented for some years. We spent Christmas with his sister, Mary Jameson, at St. Marnocks, where many of the family were collected together.

Meanwhile Douglas had been transferred from the work as Director of Military Training to that of Director of Staff Duties, and I give a press cutting on his new appointment:

### *Press Cutting.*

#### WAR OFFICE CHANGES

Several important military changes take place in consequence of the vacation of the post of Director of Staff Duties by Lieut. General Hutchinson. His place will be filled by Major-General D. Haig, the Director of Military Training, who will be succeeded by Brigadier-General A. J. Murray, the principal Staff Officer under



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General Sir John French at Aldershot. The latter will be promoted to Major-General. The vacancy at Aldershot is expected to be filled by the appointment of Colonel W. R. Robertson. This, however, is not finally certain, as Lieut.-General Smith-Dorrien, the new Aldershot Commander, has to be consulted first.



CHAPTER VI  
AT WAR OFFICE AS DIRECTOR OF  
STAFF DUTIES

1907-1909



## CHAPTER VI

### AT WAR OFFICE AS DIRECTOR OF STAFF DUTIES

DOUGLAS's new appointment had been given him, I gather, to work up the formation of the Imperial Staff, though he was still helping Mr. Haldane with the details of the Territorial Army, about which there was so much opposition to overcome. I have often wondered how he got through all that he was doing, but it was gratifying to see how much he was depended on, and that (from what I was told) he seemed to smooth all the troubles with his clear outlook and professional knowledge.

During the week-ends we began to play golf regularly, which certainly helped him. In the early part of January 1908, the King and Queen invited us to Sandringham for a shooting-party, and the following press account describes a few of the party staying.

#### *Press Account.*

#### SHOOTING PARTY AT SANDRINGHAM

The party for the last week of the Sandringham winter season was larger than usual, and it included one or two newcomers. The Duke and Duchess of Roxburghe were there, and the Queen walked and talked much with the dainty American peeress, and will probably attend the big ball which she proposes to give in June. Sir Henry and Lady Evelyn Ewart, General Douglas Haig and his pretty but very delicate-looking wife, Mr. and Mrs. Willie James, Lord Claud Hamilton and Miss Jane Thornehill, Lord Burton's sister-in-law, together with some shooting men, made up the party. The most depressing weather did not prevent the Queen and the other ladies from joining the guns at lunch, and this meal, which is usually served in a cosy marquee, is the cheeriest event of the day at Sandringham. The fare, although not so elaborate as at some of the shoots given by ambitious millionaires, is by no means Spartan, and it is always

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piping hot, while the Royal servants lay the table and wait with as much ceremony as at a meal indoors.

Their Majesties showed us, as always, their great interest and kindness, and besides shooting, we played golf and rode every morning with Princess Victoria. The Queen looked younger than ever and so trim in her shooting clothes. Her Majesty put before me a little scheme that she had thought out for me. My twin sister Violet, Maid of Honour, had asked permission to go to America, and the Queen, realising that I was sometimes lonely with all the work that Douglas was doing, thought that it would be a nice change for me to take my sister's turn of waiting. I was overjoyed at the idea, and it was arranged that I should start directly Their Majesties returned to London towards the end of January. The King and Queen were then very distressed about the accident that had happened to their race-horse Persimmon, who a few weeks previously had broken his pelvis and was being kept slung up in the stables. It was a curious sight to see the poor animal in this position.

Douglas then arranged for us to stay with his sister at Princes Gate, which would make my duties at Court more easy. It was delightful for me to return to the old life again, but at first the King was a little shocked that a married woman should be called a maid of honour, especially when the baby was brought to see her Majesty. "Most improper", the King remarked to me! Unfortunately, during my waiting (February 3rd, 1908) Their Majesties heard of the murder of the King and Crown Prince of Portugal. They were greatly distressed and the Court was plunged into mourning. I left soon after, very sadly, but I appreciated the happiness of being with the Queen again and her kind thought in giving me this treat.

On our return to Trunk House Douglas was busier than ever and again the work seemed telling on his health. He was showing signs of malaria, and after several bouts of it,

## AT WAR OFFICE AS DIRECTOR OF STAFF DUTIES

coupled with influenza, I insisted on taking him to Folkestone, where he recovered in a wonderful way. We enjoyed the rest and being together a little, though the beginning of May was not very warm at the seaside. After our return, Douglas had a lot of travelling about to do and this was fortunate as it again took him away from the War Office to a great extent.

On November 7th, 1908, my second daughter was born. Douglas's family were disappointed that I had not given him a boy, but she was a lovely baby and we ourselves were delighted with her. We spent a quiet and happy Christmas and New Year together and the new baby was christened at the small church at Cove on January 2nd. Princess Victoria was her godmother. She was named Victoria, Doris (after me) and Rachael, which was the name of Douglas's mother, whom he so loved. We then took a small house in London, because Douglas thought Trunk House was rather lonely for me, and had contemplated moving nearer London before long. Kingston Hill, he felt, might suit us well, and he had been making enquiries from the local agents. My new baby was very ill whilst we were in London and we felt very anxious about her, and were therefore rather relieved to get the babies back to Trunk House early in April.

On the 15th, Douglas came home with rather exciting news. He had seen Sir O'Moore Creagh, who had asked him to go to India with him as Chief of Staff. Douglas had not replied definitely, wanting time to think it over. He did not like leaving his work and also we had now two small children. However, we finally agreed that such a good appointment should not be refused, though it entailed leaving our children. We did not like taking them because of the difficulties of getting good milk and food in India.

We decided to start for India early in October 1909, which enabled Douglas to leave his work at the War Office all in

order. Meanwhile the Queen heard the news and instructed Miss Charlotte Knollys to wire Douglas whether he would spare me and the children to stay at Balmoral for a couple of weeks, and I left for there on August 16th. We had rather a hectic journey because somehow I managed to lose both the cots and bath, which latter contained all the most necessary implements for the small baby. However, on arrival the Master of the Household was much amused at my distress, for I found that the Queen herself had arranged cots and every conceivable detail for the babies' nurseries. We had such a happy time there, the Queen insisting on seeing the baby bathed and taking my eldest out with her every day for a drive. My only fear was that she might spoil the elder one with all the presents that she gave her. The Queen felt very sorry for me having to leave the children, and Princess Victoria wanted to adopt the small baby, who was a very lovely child even at that age. Douglas went to Balmoral for a few days before our departure for India, for the King to bid him farewell. On his return he remarked how much he had enjoyed himself and how kind the King and Queen had been to him.

On our return home I was busy packing up and felt most grateful to Henrietta, who arranged with us to take complete charge of the children. She had prepared delightful nurseries at their shooting place, Stowlangtoft, and we stayed there before leaving for India. We sailed from Marseilles on the *Mantua* on October 8th. I give the following two press cuttings, which are of interest.

### *Press Cuttings.*

Major-General Douglas Haig, it is understood, has been selected to serve in India as Chief of Staff to General Sir O'Moore Creagh, the new Commander-in-Chief. General Haig is at present Director of Staff Duties at the War Office, and has filled many important appointments. He was for some years Inspector-General of Cavalry in India and is believed to hold the record among Cavalry Officers



## AT WAR OFFICE AS DIRECTOR OF STAFF DUTIES

for rapidity of promotion. Twelve years ago he was a Captain in the 7th Hussars, but he has been a Major-General for nearly five years; and thus in seven he passed through the rank of Captain, Major, Lieutenant-Colonel and Major-General. He owes this rapid promotion of course to the two campaigns in which he took a very conspicuous part—the Sudan War and the South African War. In the latter campaign he was for some time Chief of Staff to General Sir John French, and especially distinguished himself during the fighting around Colesberg.

*A Rapid Rise.*—Ten years ago General Haig was a Major in the 7th Hussars and a junior one at that. Since that time he has progressed by leaps and bounds. Among other appointments he has held that of Inspector of Cavalry in India and Director of Staff Duties at the War Office, a post he is now to relinquish to go to India. "I would rather have Haig's luck than a licence to steal horses" said a brother officer in one of the Service Clubs, and this is the general feeling throughout the Army.



CHAPTER VII  
INDIA AGAIN

1909-1911



## CHAPTER VII

### INDIA AGAIN

ALTHOUGH leaving the children had been a great wrench, Douglas and I had a pleasant time on board the *Mantua*. John Vaughan travelled with us. We had the usual sports, fancy-dress ball and so on. There was one incident on the voyage to which I have often looked back with interest. Indian fortune-tellers are generally known to be above the average. We found a wonderful man at Port Said who foretold Douglas's future like reading a map. The Great War was described and the anxieties and responsibilities entailed. Douglas was to be successful in everything that he undertook, and would save his country. Honours would be showered on him, but he would be much concerned about the sufferings around him. At the time I did not realise properly the future that this man was unfolding.

We arrived at Bombay on October 22nd, and on getting to the Taj Mahal found our old friend, Sir Pertab Singh, who insisted, as before, on our being his guests at the hotel. Douglas had written beforehand to an old servant of his, "David", to get him some servants, and we found a butler and ayah, also Douglas's old dressing boy "Furreed", whom he had had ever since 1886 when he was in the 7th Hussars at Secunderabad.

When we had tidied up a bit and lunched, Sir Pertab Singh motored us to see some Arab stables and showed us the Maharajah of Gwalior's house beyond Malabar Hill. The stables were particularly interesting and pony after pony seemed to come out, and Sir Pertab and Douglas were absorbed in their various points. I was quite at sea over their eager talk, but realised that both agreed that the Arab pony

was far superior to the waler. In the evening we dined at the Yacht Club with Mr. Craigie, a special friend of Douglas's, and indeed a friend to all who came to India. He was a charming old man and we enjoyed the excellent dinner and the quiet of the club.

When we arrived at Simla, Sir O'Moore Creagh's car met us to take us for lunch with him at Snowdon. Lady Creagh had not yet arrived. I was charmed with Sir O'Moore and with his delightful brogue and wit. A bungalow, "Kenilworth", was ready for us, which had been taken for us provisionally by General Wapshawe, also a great friend of Douglas's.

Douglas as usual threw himself at once into his work, and was at his office the next day, but I was very happy to think that I would see much more of him than during those rather awful days when he was working so hard on the details of the Territorial Army. In fact I am afraid that I hated the sound of Territorial because it had so often nearly broken Douglas's health!

Early in December we decided to take a short sight-seeing tour together. Our first visit was to Agra. It was very different going with Douglas instead of an ayah, as I had done on my previous visit to India. The little diving boys had then got such a lot of money out of me! The Taj looked as usual so beautiful with trim garden blazing with flowers, but I think that by moonlight the Taj mystifies one more. We also went over the fort, which I had not visited last time, with an old Mutiny soldier. We stayed that night at the Circuit House, which was most comfortable, and the following day we motored to Fatehpur Sikri (City of Victory), which Douglas loved visiting, partly, I think, because of the name, and also because the Emperor Akbar had been a great religious thinker. We explored every little nook, but our visit was a little spoilt the first day by a large party of trippers whose noise brought discord to the place

and kept us awake half the night. We spent two days there and very reluctantly left for Calcutta, where we had been invited to stay with General Cowans. The journey was quite a long one, but we found very luxurious comfort in General Cowans's house in the Fort.

A few days after our arrival Douglas let me know that his duties obliged him to be in Calcutta and that General Cowans had managed to get him quarters in the Fort (the Water Gate), and that I must try and furnish it in a couple of days. He turned to Mr. Cheers, his confidential clerk, to help me. I thoroughly enjoyed bargaining in the bazaars and managed to carry out Douglas's wishes. Looking back, I feel that my happiest time in India was at the Water Gate—just having our own furniture, though rather rickety stuff—and Henrietta had given me for Trunk House some lovely yellow curtains, which I had not used there, so I had them for the Water Gate and I turned them into sofa- and chair-covers. As it was so hot, I had arranged to have muslin curtains which had nice yellow bows. This will make the present generation scream. They like pickled furniture, no bows or fal-de-lals and no photographs. I am still always surrounded by photographs of my family. Then there was the golf course at Tollygunge; and the society at Calcutta was so much wider than at Simla. One got away from the eternal military circle and came across many very interesting people.

We met Lady Creagh for the first time then, and I loved her throughout our stay in India. She had a pretty difficult time, because a certain member of Sir O'Moore's staff and his wife were always intriguing between the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy and belittling poor Lady Creagh. They made a great deal of mischief too amongst the rest of the staff. Douglas and I did our best to combat this evil. I have already mentioned that we had seen very little of the Viceroy and Lady Minto during our previous visit to India, really

owing to the quiet time we had led at Mashobra, but a few days after our arrival, we were invited by them to Barrackpur, the Viceroy's house just outside Calcutta, for lunch and golf. It was delightfully peaceful and Lord and Lady Minto could not have been kinder.

We certainly had a gay time then, but I did not keep Douglas late at dances, excepting one, which was not my fault. It was not really a dance but a large ball given by Sir E. Baker, the Lieut.-Governor of Bengal. We dined beforehand, and as it was an official ceremony we were obliged to stay for the late supper afterwards. Douglas chaffed me going home because His Honour had taken me in, and he remarked that for once I had had to eat! I have always hated late suppers.

It was really a delightful life in Calcutta; riding early, horse shows, golf at Tollygunge, and in addition Douglas was much less away than as Inspector-General of Cavalry.

I must tell an amusing story of a happening the first time Douglas left me at Calcutta. A young man whom I had known well in England was being rather rushed by a lady into marriage, and I was roped in for rides, etc., though I did not realise the romance going on. I suddenly thought of giving a dinner at Tollygunge for these two young people, and the other young sparks and beauties of Calcutta, but quite a small party.

I asked one of the Commander-in-Chief's A.D.C.s to help me over the ordering of the wine and left it in his hands to arrange. We had a very rowdy time, dancing first and trying to imitate the "apache". Late in the evening someone suggested "pigsticking", the ladies to ride on the young men's backs and to use billiard cues as spears. I think an accident stopped us and we got home pretty late. Unfortunately the bill for the wine, which was a terrible one, did not come in until Douglas had returned. He was astounded by its magnitude and said we must have had enough drink for an army.



Stories of our rowdiness went round, of course, and all expected Douglas to be furious with me, but he only laughed. He did not, however, enjoy paying the bill.

Douglas rather disliked being tied by the Legislative Council, which had just been started. He hated the atmosphere and all the talking. He felt it was no place for a soldier, and it seemed so ridiculous that both the Commander-in-Chief and himself should be obliged to attend. Their obvious duty was with the troops, and eventually Douglas got himself removed from the Council.

We paid rather a delightful two days' visit to the Tilneys (17th Lancers) at Meerut, and Douglas enjoyed being with his old regiment again; then on to Pindi where Douglas left me with the Wodehouses whilst he was in camp for manoeuvres. We returned to Simla early in April to another house, "Hollyoak", for which I had made arrangements beforehand. Douglas thought it very comfortable and congratulated me.

On May 7th, 1910, we heard the sad news of the King's death. It was a terrible blow because we had not realised that His Majesty was so ill. I wired at once to Miss Charlotte Knollys: "Please express to the Queen and Princess Victoria our deepest sympathy. And with the Household we mourn. Doris and Douglas Haig." We were very upset by the news, but Douglas never expressed just how much we really felt the loss. I must put on record our personal feelings at the time. Both of us realised that besides a great King we had lost a master and friend whose unflinching interest had been a constant inspiration to us. The King had first come across Douglas when the latter was staying with Henrietta and Willie Jameson at Stowlangtoft for a shooting-party, shortly before he went to the Sudan. The King had then taken a great interest in the young soldier. He had asked Douglas to write to him and in the dictated replies sent, the King would give kindly advice,

especially pointing out to Douglas not to be too critical. The King had invited him to stay before leaving for various appointments. The King and Queen had also shown much interest in our engagement and marriage, and at that time the King's advice to me "not to interfere with his best cavalry officer's work" was of great help to me, though the task was not difficult to carry out. As regards myself, I was as Maid of Honour only a very ordinary girl, but the King, by his many little kindnesses and occasional words of interest, made me adore him as he did all those who came near him intimately. We felt very deeply for the Queen in her sorrow.

At that time Douglas had been granted leave of absence from the Legislative Council, and again began travelling about the country. At Simla, whenever possible, we camped out at the week-ends and played golf at Naldera, usually taking some friends with us.

It was now approaching the time when the Viceroy and Lady Minto were to leave India, and farewell parties began at Simla. Douglas presided over and arranged a large farewell ball to them, and over it he was very naughty, because he would not allow any ladies to serve on the committee, saying that they only caused friction and quarrelling. I scolded him properly about it, but the ball was most successful, which shows that men can organise even social parties.

We left for Calcutta early in November, returning to our Water Gate quarters, to which we were really delighted to get back. They had all been painted up, and my yellow chairs and muslin curtains looked so fresh and clean. On the night of our arrival, the 14th of November, we dined at Belvedere with Sir E. Baker, the Lieut.-Governor of Bengal, and met the Viceroy and Lady Minto. Sir E. Baker and Lord Minto made delightful speeches. On the 16th there was another farewell dinner for Their Excellencies at

the Calcutta Turf Club, which was all decorated and the grounds illuminated—a wonderful sight.

The new Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, and Lady Hardinge arrived on the 21st of November, and we, with many others, were there to meet them. Lady Hardinge had been a great friend of mine so she greeted me warmly. In the evening a state dinner was given at Government House, and Lord Minto and Lord Hardinge made speeches. On the 22nd we had a farewell lunch with Lord and Lady Minto. Partings of this kind are always very sad, and I am certain that the Mintos hated going. Everybody had liked them so much and they had been very kind to us personally. After their departure Douglas sent a telegram to them wishing them all good luck and good-bye.

Douglas then began his strenuous journeys again, and the first week-end after he had left, Lady Hardinge invited me to stay at Barrackpur, where I had a delightful time. Douglas returned to Calcutta in time for a quiet Christmas with me, but after a few days left for some manœuvres and staff rides.

I have forgotten to mention that both in Calcutta and Simla the ladies had been very keen on first aid and nursing classes, in which we were greatly helped by the Viceroy's doctor, Major Crook Lawless. I felt that if the ladies were to be of any use in war-time they should have some practice, and therefore arranged for them to be trained at a small hospital at Simla. The matron taught them bed-making, bandaging, and so on, and I insisted that they should also go to the out-patients department to do actual dressings under the hospital doctor's instructions. We were rather unfortunate, however, on our first day. A man, who had been bitten by a snake, was brought in, and his finger was an appalling sight from having had a tourniquet on it. Arrangements were made to have it amputated. I noted down everything that happened, but my class gradually

faded away because they could not bear to look on. Afterwards they told me how horrified they had been to see me, as they left, still standing taking notes whilst the finger was being taken off.

These classes in Simla led to my persuading ladies to go in turn for a short course to a hospital in Calcutta, and I was the first to try this. I should mention that Douglas had encouraged me in this, because he felt that the existing medical and nursing arrangements for war were most unsatisfactory. I learnt there the hard work and sadness entailed in nursing patients, and came across cases of kala-azar, plague, cholera, dysentery, many types of malaria and leprosy. I was surprised to see the last-named not isolated from the other patients, but found that in India it was looked on as not infectious unless the actual wounds were touched. These classes and courses in hospital finally led to the formation of the Voluntary Aid Detachments in India.

I have given rather shortly and roughly the sort of life we led in Calcutta, and come next to the visit of the Crown Prince of Germany, which caused some excitement in India at the time. He arrived at Calcutta on the 3rd of February 1911, accompanied by a large staff, amongst them Count zu Dohna and Sir Harold Stewart. Count zu Dohna was afterwards, I believe, in charge of German espionage work during the war. The Prince was received in great state, the Viceroy going to the station to meet him, and that evening we attended a large banquet given in his honour at Government House. His visit as the guest of the Viceroy was to last until the 13th, and the whole party left for Barrackpur until the 11th. Douglas and I were invited to stay there for one night, but Lady Hardinge realised that the Prince and his staff might wish to make trouble in India, and to help her she asked me to stay on a few more days. She explained to me in confidence that the Prince must somehow be kept at Barrack-

pur as it was undesirable for him to go to Calcutta. I played golf with him nearly every day. He was a much poorer player than even I. I was surprised during one of our matches, when he suddenly dropped his golf clubs and rushed into a field to speak to some Indians.

The Prince seemed amused at my nursing at a hospital, and particularly at a story which I told him of how a patient under an anaesthetic can be awakened if tickled in the fifth rib. The Prince insisted on a practical demonstration, and I remember him laying himself down on the billiard table at Barrackpur and asking me to prove my statement.

However, the Prince became very restive to get back to Calcutta and so Lady Hardinge and I concocted a little plot. We pretended that the Prince had a temperature, put him to bed, and succeeded in keeping him there until the day before he was due to leave. But even the one night he spent in Calcutta we discovered he was out for trouble, having secretly arranged to visit an opium den. Hearing of his intention, I informed Lady Hardinge and the visit was stopped.

Neil Haig, Douglas's cousin, told me that the Prince, at one particular place during his tour, managed with the help of his chauffeur to give his staff the slip, and went off to meet one of the Burmese Princesses. He had met her, I believe, at a ball, and had secretly arranged this visit. He was due that afternoon at a garden-party given in his honour, but after lunch he said he had something very important to write, and went off to his room, saying he wanted to be left alone. He very cleverly eluded his equerries, and by motoring so far and taking a train and then a boat he reached his destination. His absence caused frightful excitement and consternation, and Neil, stuttering badly, called to the German staff officers, "You'll catch it from the Kaiser and you'll lose all your decorations!" After much

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discussion a telegram was despatched to the Kaiser saying that the Crown Prince was missing. However, he was ultimately discovered and brought back.

I remember playing with the Crown Prince and others in Calcutta that childish game, "Hide and Seek". At one point in the game we got to the King's throne, which is used by the Viceroy, and the Prince remarked to me that the Kaiser would soon be sitting on this throne.

No one at the time thought very seriously about this rather ill-chosen remark, but three and a half years later, at the outbreak of war, it recurred to me as it must have done to many others who also heard it.

The Prince did not mention the Crown Princess to me, but his staff were devoted to her and told me that she was a charming lady. She had started with the Prince on his sea journey, but when half-way had been obliged to return for family reasons. I wish that she had come too, because she did sound so nice.

Feeling that we wanted a change, Douglas and I decided to take another sight-seeing tour, so we visited Benares and Delhi, arriving back on the 6th of April at Simla, where we had still another house, "Townsend".

About that time the English papers recorded some new appointments and amongst them Douglas as Commander-in-Chief of Aldershot, though he had heard nothing about it himself. I give one of the announcements:

### MILITARY APPOINTMENTS

The *Standard* regards it as practically certain that Lieutenant-General Sir H. L. Smith-Dorrien, commanding the troops at Aldershot, and General Sir W. G. Nicholson, Chief of the Imperial Staff, will accompany the King to India.

The *Standard* adds: It is stated on good authority that

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General Sir J. D. P. French, Inspector-General of the Forces, will become Chief of the Imperial Staff at the War Office, thus allowing Sir W. Nicholson to accompany the King.

It is also stated that Lieutenant-General Sir D. Haig, Chief of the General Staff of the Indian Army, will leave India to take over the Command at Aldershot.

The same journal says there is a strong belief in the possibility of General Sir E. G. Barrow, commanding the Southern Army in India, succeeding Sir Douglas Haig.

On the 12th of May a private wire from Mr. Haldane reached Douglas, asking whether he would like to be considered for the Aldershot Command. To this Douglas replied in the affirmative. No appointment could have given him more pleasure. His chief reason against leaving England for India was his fear that war would break out while he was away. He looked forward to having his troops all round him at Aldershot, and explained to me that it was the best command in the army. There was much communication between the Viceroy and the Government at home, and it was at last decided that Douglas should remain in India until after the Durbar. On the 10th of August the official statement by Reuter came out, in which it was stated that General French was appointed as Chief of the Imperial General Staff and that Douglas was to be Commander-in-Chief at Aldershot. This was three months after Mr. Haldane's telegram.

Just about then we were terribly worried about Xandra, who had been operated on for glands, but the reassuring letters we received from Henrietta and the nurse prevented us from worrying too much, especially as we knew that we would soon be with them again. We cabled, however, for Xandra to be taken to the east coast until our return.

The time for the Durbar at Delhi was now approaching,

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and I had been left in Simla to pack up whilst Douglas inspected some regiments and units of the Indian army for the last time. The ground was covered with snow and it was bitterly cold, more like winter in Newfoundland or Canada I should think, as there was bright sunshine during the day. I remember sliding down the hills, which were just sheets of ice. The Indian servants did not like the weather and my rickshaw-men ran away, so I was forced to walk wherever I went. Our ponies were already on their way to Delhi. The houses in Simla are not made to stand the cold and one seemed to get draughts everywhere. Lady Creagh, on hearing of my being alone at Simla, and realising that I would be sure to feel the bitter cold there dreadfully, invited me to go with her earlier to the Commander-in-Chief's camp. I therefore finished off the packing and started for Delhi a week earlier than I had intended.

I shall never forget my first sight of the camp. It was an absolute mass of white canvas and looked very beautiful. So huge was it that those who have not experienced the sight can hardly imagine the impression that it made on my mind. I was horrified, however, at the two tents allotted to Douglas and myself. There had been a lot of rain, and the Commander-in-Chief's camp being on the lower ground, below the Royal tents, was almost water-logged and mattresses were soaked. There was nowhere to hang out one's dresses and they had to be left in boxes which more or less were floating in the water. I am afraid I made an awful row about it, but it was really necessary and the result was that the tents were dried and decorated. Unfortunately, however, I had to sleep in this dampness, which afterwards caused me much suffering from dysentery, of which I very nearly died on the voyage back to England.

By the time that Douglas arrived all was in order and he was delighted. His train reached Delhi early in the morning, and after settling his things, we went to see the polo matches



which were then in progress. Douglas was made president of the polo committee for the Durbar period and he had therefore a lot to attend to in connection with it. Early the following morning we rode to Jagatpur Island—"the Island" as it was called by us—where the military camp was pitched. The troops were rehearsing the church parade for the Sunday and the presentation of colours which was to take place the following Monday. We watched these rehearsals with great interest and in the afternoon we watched polo again. Fresh arrivals came in daily to the various camps.

Early on the morning of the 1st of December, Neil Haig (Douglas's cousin) of the Inniskillings and Miss Gerard Creagh (niece of Sir O'Moore Creagh) joined my party, and we all had breakfast with Douglas at the Cavalry Division camp. I was then rather hoping that Neil and Gerard would make a match of it. Some time afterwards they did become engaged and the marriage proved to be one of the happiest ones which I have had the privilege to come across. Douglas and I lunched that day with Captain Allanson, who had organised and was running the camps of the Governor of Bengal and the Government of India. We were astounded at the beauty of the latter, but were rather horrified to hear that the cost of it had amounted to £30,000. We learned that the occupants had nothing at all to pay and were even brought and sent home at Government expense. This was very different from what was being done for the regimental soldiers and their wives. They had to pay very stiffly for everything, billets and food included, though they were all on official duty. I must not, however, dwell on old grievances, now long past and almost forgotten.

The rehearsal of the review took place on the 2nd of December. I took Gerard with me and we had a fine view from the flagstaff, where Douglas had taken us. Douglas rode round the troops with the Commander-in-Chief. The

King was represented by Major Keighly of the Viceroy's Bodyguard. On our return to camp we found that the mail had arrived from England and Douglas received a letter from his friend, Kiggell, telling him that the situation with Germany was very strained. Douglas felt very glad that he was returning to England so soon.

The next day there was an alarming accident. Six reception tents in the camp of the Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab were burnt to ashes. It all happened so quickly that in a matter of two minutes nothing was left. All the silver, furnishings and glass were destroyed. It was thought that the fire had been caused by the fusing of the electric wires. We were all rather frightened by this, and as Douglas and I had all our personal belongings ready packed for England in our tent, we decided to do without the electric light and used lamps. It was rather difficult to dress by such feeble illumination but it was certainly safer. On the 4th of December the camp was officially opened and the rest of the guests arrived.

On the 5th of December the Viceroy and Lady Hardinge arrived and the state entry of Their Majesties was rehearsed. Mr. de Boulay, of the Viceroy's staff, represented the King. All went well during the rehearsal, but immediately afterwards there was another disastrous fire, and a large tent, in which the ruling Princes of India were to be presented to the King, was burned down.

Later, Douglas took me to visit some of the Rajahs' camps—Sikkim, Cooch Behar and Kashmir. We were especially struck by the beauty of the embroideries of the Kashmir-shawl type, lining the state tents of the Kashmir camp. The fine dark walnut carvings all round were also very impressive. On our return, we met Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, who had come to India in Their Majesties' suite. He had called on Douglas in order to get matters settled with regard to furniture at Aldershot, which we might buy.

He rather staggered us by saying that the cost of getting into Government House at Aldershot would be about £4500. Naturally we could not decide anything definitely with Sir Horace then, but we promised that soon after our return to England we would call at Government House and see the furniture and let him know what we might purchase from him. That night we attended a big dinner given by the Commander-in-Chief. It was a wonderful sight and formed the first large ceremony in connection with the Durbar.

The 7th of December, the day for which so many preparations had been made, arrived. Their Majesties appeared about 10 A.M. Douglas rode with the Commander-in-Chief and other officers, who were presented by the Viceroy to Their Majesties. Many others, including the Governors of provinces, the Viceroy's council and Commanders of Armies, were also presented. The guns were booming and there was much excitement. The wives of officers, including myself, watched the procession pass and we all remarked that we could not see the King. The procession passed so quickly and His Majesty was so surrounded that it was whispered that the detectives were frightened and thought it wiser for His Majesty to arrive in this way; others said it was merely that it was badly staged. Certainly it was very ineffective.

In the Commander-in-Chief's camp we had all been having our meals together in a large tent, but except on the night of the dinner-party the tent had never been full. However, after all the officials and guests had arrived we formed a very large and happy company.

In the afternoon of the following day the King laid the foundation stone of the Memorial to King Edward. The site was just opposite the Fort, and a great crowd watched the proceedings. Our party did not take part in any ceremonies next day, but went out riding instead. In the afternoon we watched the polo matches, at which Their

Majesties were present. They seemed to move about much more freely now; in fact the King walked to a football match which was being played near the polo ground. He received a splendid welcome from the soldiers and the cheering was tremendous. On the Sunday the King and Queen attended church parade on Jagatpur Island. The service was most impressive, about eight thousand soldiers taking part. Their Majesties sat in the midst of them, on chairs specially placed for the occasion. I think the soldiers really appreciated the simple act of the King and Queen worshipping among them.

Perhaps the most impressive sight witnessed during the whole Durbar was the presentation of colours to seven British regiments. They were grouped on the polo ground and, as my husband remarked to me at the time, they stood like rocks—motionless. He considered that the parade that day was perfect. His Majesty the King rode on to the parade ground and, at the word of command, the men presented arms and the King rode round and inspected them. His Majesty then went to the saluting base, dismounted and stood there during the ceremony of consecration of the colours, in which Presbyterian ministers and the Roman Catholic Archbishop took part. The massed bands of the regiments played most of the time, and this added greatly to the impressiveness of the show. Instead of addressing the parade as a whole His Majesty handed a signed address to each regiment present. As the troops marched past they were headed by their colours, and the bands struck up "Auld Lang Syne" and "God save the King". His Majesty then remounted and he was given three very hearty cheers.

The 12th of December was the most important day, the real ceremony of the Durbar. All the Princes of India made obeisance to their Emperor. We left early, in order to reach the arena in good time. The sight that burst upon us was one difficult to describe. Having seen the arena being made,

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Douglas and I were to a certain extent prepared for it. The arena was in the shape of a horse-shoe. It was simply crammed with Indians of all descriptions and, with their coloured turbans, they looked exactly like a huge mass of flowers. The jewels worn by the Indians flashed in the brilliant sunshine. It is, of course, well known that an Indian always wears the best that he possesses when he wishes to do honour to his friends or guests.

We had splendid seats allotted to us, just opposite to the large golden thrones where Their Majesties would be seated, with the arena all around them. As we had ample time to spare before Their Majesties would arrive, Douglas and I walked round and talked to our friends, and in that way the time passed quickly. We also made our way nearer to the glittering throng of Indians, to see more closely the show which made such a fine effect from afar. Then there rose shouts of excitement and, first of all, the Viceroy and Lady Hardinge drove up to the Royal Pavilion. Lady Hardinge, as usual, looked charming and was beautifully though very simply dressed. I remember so clearly her gown of dove grey with hat to match. They stood waiting for Their Majesties, whose carriage was moving slowly through enthusiastic and cheering crowds. The King and Queen drove in their state robes and wore their crowns. The Royal Pavilion, which was made in three tiers, was supported by four columns surmounted by a huge golden dome. It was decorated with red, that being in the Indian's mind the Imperial colour.

Their Majesties' arrival was heralded by a salute of a hundred and one guns. We all rose to our feet whilst the procession passed and the Indians salaamed to Their Majesties. As they alighted from their carriage, the pages met them and took charge of their purple trains and they walked up to their golden thrones on the dais, bowing to right and left. The Viceroy and Lady Hardinge and the members of

the household then seated themselves near Their Majesties. The Gentlemen-at-Arms, the Scottish Archers and the Indian attendants carrying maces stood round as Their Majesties' bodyguard. The Indians wore scarlet robes embroidered with gold and had white turbans striped with gold upon their heads. The whole scene presented a most wonderful spectacle and the gorgeous sky-blue robes and turban of the Maharajah Sir Pertab Singh, with the Maharajah of Bikanir in attendance, added but another note of colour to the already gorgeous picture. Sir Henry Mahon, Master of Ceremonies, asked His Majesty's permission to open the Durbar. A flourish of trumpets and a roll of drums sounded and His Majesty then read his address. There was a little dissatisfaction amongst the Bengalis because the King's speech contained an announcement that in future Delhi, instead of Calcutta, would be the capital of India.

It was fortunate that we had such a beautiful day for the ceremony, as the strong sunshine enhanced the general effect. Indeed the sun was so strong that an umbrella had to be held over the Queen's head for shade. I remember feeling extremely anxious about that red umbrella, because the Indian who held it was, naturally, looking all around him and I was afraid he might knock off the Queen's crown.

I am afraid this is a very poor description, though I have a very clear picture of it all in my mind. For those of my readers who want a really beautiful description of the occasion, I would recommend a wonderful book called *Narrative of the Visit to India of Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary*, by the Hon. John Fortescue.

The whole ceremony was over by two o'clock and we returned to camp for lunch. That evening Douglas and I were among the guests who dined at the state banquet in the Royal camp. This was indeed a magnificent sight, with the Indians in their rich embroideries, turbans and jewels. We had an opportunity of speaking to our dear old friend

Sir Pertab Singh. After dinner there was a reception, but the number of the guests was so great that it was somewhat of a crush. The Queen very graciously spoke to Douglas and myself and remarked that she and the King were glad that we were going to Aldershot so soon.

The next day was again an important occasion. Their Majesties had to show themselves, like the Mogul rulers of old, as my husband said to me, to their people. They came again in their crowns and robes and were placed on a balcony in the fort, overlooking the *bala*, where the native fête was being held.

In the afternoon Their Majesties gave a garden-party and in the evening the whole mosque, *diwani kas* and so on were lit up by electricity, giving an effect something like the flood-lighting of the present day.

The 14th of December was the day of the Grand Review. Douglas naturally had to be on duty early. He took Gerard and me to a point where we could have a good view, and left us. We were much amused by the freshness of some of the officers' horses. One officer was bucked off in a most undignified way in front of the whole audience. We knew him very well, and he was one of those people who was always rather pleased with himself, so we could not help enjoying his humiliation. He was in the 10th Hussars, and he explained to us afterwards that the fur was tickling his horse's back. But the fact that he was fat and had probably a flabby grip was more likely to be the true explanation.

Douglas afterwards told me that everything had gone better than he had ever hoped it would. The cavalry had galloped in splendid order and the divisions had marched past in solid blocks. Of course to soldiers' wives the military part was the most interesting, and I was so glad for my husband's sake that all had been so successful.

That evening we attended the Investiture, and the most touching sight was the Queen receiving the G.C.S.I. from

her husband, the King. I can see her now, rather flushed, looking beautiful in her pale blue dress and magnificent diamonds, taking simply this Order given to her officially, just like anyone else. Douglas was amongst those to whom an Order was given.

There was rather an alarming incident during the ceremony. A cry of "Fire!" was raised. Curiously, no one appeared to realise that we were in a tent and that in order to get out all that had to be done was simply to lift the flaps on all sides. The panic was terrible for a moment and everybody rushed for the entrance. One distinguished lady completely lost her head and called out, "King or no King, I go out of here!" Then someone shouted, "Sit down, sit down", and the panic was miraculously calmed. Of course when one remembered the tents which had already been burned down just in a few minutes one could be excused for being afraid. We heard afterwards that a tent occupied by Lord Crewe's secretary, and close to the Queen's tent, had caught fire and had been burned down in three minutes. The calmness shown by the King and Queen whilst the panic was at its height greatly helped to allay the excitement.

Thus ended the ceremonies of the Durbar.

On the 15th of December Douglas handed over all the papers concerning the work which he had done to General Sir Percy Lake, who succeeded him. We went to see the assault-at-arms and races, also an excellent musical ride given by the 17th Lancers, with whom we dined that night in camp. I was greatly impressed by the silver on their table, and asked the Colonel whether they had all the regimental silver with them. He replied that they had debated the matter seriously and decided that they must make a good show for such an important event. The fire, though, had caused him much anxiety. On the next day all those who were staying in the Commander-in-Chief's camp were photographed.

Their Majesties left at 12 noon, the King for Nepal, where



a very large shoot had been arranged for him, and the Queen for Agra, Her Majesty being anxious to visit places of historical interest.

On the 17th of December we said good-bye to our many kind friends in India and left by express train for Bombay. We embarked on the P. & O. s.s. *Oceana* on the 23rd, but I was not able to take much interest in the voyage. I became very ill from an attack of dysentery contracted by sleeping in the damp tent at Delhi. I am afraid I was a great source of anxiety to Douglas, as the doctor on board told him at one time that there was little hope of my recovery. However, I managed to cheat the doctor that time, as I have done again on more than one occasion since.

We had arranged to meet Willie and Henrietta Jameson in Egypt, but this had to be given up owing to my illness, and we returned slowly, breaking our journey at Marseilles and Paris. On arrival in London we found that Henrietta had arranged for us to stay at Princes Gate, but the children were not there to meet us. The doctor who was attending Xandra had advised against her making the train journey. I had made a wonderful recovery and had thrown off all the effects of my illness by the time we arrived in London. Many friends met us at Charing Cross, but we missed Henrietta, who had always been at the station on previous occasions to welcome her brother home. She and Willie were still in Egypt.



CHAPTER VIII  
ALDERSHOT  
1911-1914



## CHAPTER VIII

### ALDERSHOT

It was nice getting back to Princes Gate, with all its comforts. Unfortunately few of the old servants were left, but Johanna, the head housemaid, had remained and we were overjoyed to see her.

Douglas visited the War Office the following day and told me that Mr. Haldane had been so pleased to see him again. Nothing, however, had been definitely fixed as to the date on which he was to "take over" at Aldershot.

We decided, therefore, to leave next day for Radway Grange, to see the children. Lord Kitchener lunched with us that day and seemed very well. On our arrival at Kineton (the station for Radway) the children were on the platform to meet the Daddy and Mummy they hardly knew. When we left them they were two years and nine months old respectively, and we had been away for three years. At first we did not recognise each other, but as there were no other children on the platform, we accosted the two quaint little things with funny green Tyrolese hats on (presents they had just received from Henrietta for our arrival), and discovered they were our daughters. Both were sweet and sedate on our drive to Radway, and I remarked to the nurse how good they were, especially Doria, the younger, then a lovely child with the most golden curls I have ever seen, and large brown eyes. The nurse laughed and said they were often very wild, which we found to be the case even on that first day. After tea they came out for a walk, and suddenly both ran away as hard as their little legs could carry them. Douglas remarked, "Leave them and we'll turn back home; they will soon follow". I looked back to see what they were

up to. They had stopped and were consulting together what to do. They soon rejoined us.

I telegraphed to Henrietta, who was then at Cairo: "Arrived safely. Children very well. So grateful for your motherly care of them." We remained only for a few days, because we wanted to meet Henrietta and Willie on their return from Cairo and to visit Government House, Aldershot, to settle with the Smith-Dorriens what furniture we would buy. I arranged, however, to return in a few days, to send the nurse on a holiday and to look after the children with the help of their nursery-maid. Douglas decided then to go with Henrietta and Willie to get some fishing at Careysville, whilst my hands were full with the children. I look back on those days with rather mixed pleasure. The weather was bitterly cold, with deep snow everywhere. I took our two little monkeys out morning and afternoon. I was quite unaccustomed to children and they were up to every conceivable trick they could think of! And the cold was very trying, after India and my illness. However, we got through with it.

I had one very amusing encounter with Doria, on the first night that I was with them. I was having my dinner next door to the nursery, and had left the children to the nursery-maid. Xandra had, surprisingly, gone to bed, but Doria, although it was past eight o'clock, was still refusing to go. I had said I would kiss and tuck them up when ready, but piteous tones came from the poor nursery-maid. "Miss Doria, do get to bed. Your Mummy is waiting to say good-night", etc. etc. I waited a little, hoping that the child would give way, particularly as I hated being stern with them. But it was no good, so I went in, steeling myself to be firm. As the child remained obstinate, I finished by picking her up and laying her across my knee to spank her. "Don't pull my nighty up, 'cause it hurts more" came from the child, and when I administered the smack she simply laughed and

remarked to the nursery-maid, "Poor Mummy". She knew that I minded most, but I got her to bed eventually! There was one sad thing which worried me every night: that child refused to kiss me until quite a month after I had been at Radway. I realised to the full what it must mean to mothers whose husbands are in the Indian army, and who have to leave their children so long and so often.

The following evening, after tea, I intended playing games with my small charges: instead, however, in a few minutes the whole drawing-room was stripped. All the knick-knacks were strewn on the floor—and we had many knick-knacks in those days—and I just managed to save the ink-pot before it went on to the floor too! They finished by dancing about in a paper lamp-shade which they tore to pieces. They were, and always have been, high-spirited children—perhaps it's better that than being too good—but it was difficult to deal with after a long separation.

Meanwhile Douglas had thoroughly enjoyed his fishing with Henrietta and Willie. We both returned to London at the end of February to resume our preparations for Aldershot and the choosing of furniture.

We found that Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien's estimate was a little higher than we spent, but, as we were warned that there might be dinner-parties of thirty-six or more, I found that large table-cloths (table mats were not then used), glass and silver were expensive items.

In addition to furnishing—and we had to get a good deal as we had had little at Trunk House—we had to buy the actual fixtures in Government House, a summer-house, some overmantles, and other odds and ends, which had been passed on by each Commander-in-Chief. Curiously in our case these fixtures were never resold by us, because on the outbreak of war, the new army being a movable one, the Commander-in-Chief would not take them.

We left for the Queen's Hotel, Farnborough, on Feb-

ruary 29th, 1912, and Douglas officially took over Command at Aldershot the next day, March 1st. His personal staff—Captain Charteris, R.E., and Captain Baird, 12th Cavalry, A.D.C.s—reported to him on that day, also Lord Worsley (my sister's husband) as extra A.D.C. Douglas had appointed both Captain Baird and Captain Charteris when still in India, and, knowing that they were not well off, he decided that they should live with us at Government House.

We spent some days choosing colours, electric light points, etc., and then returned to Radway to be with the children for a few days. Unfortunately, however, Xandra's glands again began to give trouble, so we decided to get both children to the Queen's Hotel as soon as possible, though we had hoped not to move them until settled in our new home.

Both Douglas and I then had a very busy time—Douglas going round troops under his command, and I getting furniture in. I think this took me only four days after we got the painters out.

The children arrived on the 14th of March to stay at the Queen's Hotel. On the following day Doria, the youngest, developed a rash and the doctor feared some infectious disease. Fortunately, it turned out to be of no consequence, and in about a week's time they were comfortably installed with us at Government House.

A curious thing happened whilst at the Queen's Hotel, which made Douglas suspect the German waiters to be spies. He had kept a map on his writing-table—fortunately of no consequence—and on entering the room suddenly one day he noticed one of the waiters leave it rather hurriedly. He looked at the map and found that it had been marked with drawing-pins.

We now had a very full life, Douglas with inspections, and I, as his wife, found that I had to preside at every com-



## ALDERSHOT

mittee meeting in connection with the care of soldiers' wives and their children. I added to these duties by having first aid and home-nursing classes at Government House, and can still visualise our great activities and the keenness of those who attended. I think, on looking back, that the time we spent at Aldershot was our happiest, having such a lot of interesting things to do, being in close contact with the officers and their wives and, perhaps most of all, being with our children again and living a real family life. It was a happy change from the days when we had been so much away from each other in India and while Douglas was at the War Office, and the children certainly kept things lively.

Entertaining was a big factor at Aldershot, and Douglas always found time to help me control this. I am sure I do not know what we would have done without the valuable assistance of Captain Baird, A.D.C. Usually dinners of a dozen were given every week, because Douglas felt that at small dinners he could get to know his officers better. But there were also many large parties of thirty-six, usually a yearly one on the King's birthday, and at other times for official and foreign guests. I remember one very funny incident at a dinner given to the Bulgarians, Serbians and Montenegrins not long before the outbreak of war in the Balkans. None of our guests could speak a word of English, and the generals then at Aldershot knew little French. There were terrible silences, when suddenly an elderly General who, to everyone's surprise, had recently married but had been obliged to return from his honeymoon in order to attend the dinner, was heard to say, "*Ma femme et moi, nous avons eu mal de cœur!*" He meant "*mal de mer*".

Their Majesties the King and Queen visited Aldershot three times during our stay there, 1912-13-14. The first occasion was soon after we got established in Government House, in 1912. Unfortunately this visit was rather marred by the death of the King of Denmark on the morning that

Their Majesties were expected, and there was much agitation amongst the ladies over the mourning, which they had to get very hurriedly. Douglas met Their Majesties officially with the Guard of Honour and we were both invited to tea at the Pavilion (the Royal residence at Aldershot). After tea Their Majesties drove down the lines to the Flying Corps on Cove Common. Unfortunately the day was very windy and very little could be done. The King was greatly interested in a man-lifting kite, one of the newest developments. We dined at the Pavilion along with a few generals and their wives and others who formed the company apart from Their Majesties' household.

I remember one rather amusing episode which showed the consideration of the Queen for one of the guests, much to the latter's embarrassment! Mrs. ——— suffered from too much *embonpoint* and might have been thought to be in "an interesting condition", which thought had evidently struck Her Majesty. During the evening the Queen kindly arranged that a chair be continually given to the guest, so that she might sit down. Mrs. ——— was confused and obviously wondered why she should be singled out in this way, and would not avail herself of the kind and sympathetic attention. Therefore the Queen, seeing this, remarked to her that she ought to be taking care of herself and that she would be excused sitting in their presence. Most of the other ladies were secretly very amused, as Mrs. ——— was not really "interesting" at all; it was only her usual unfortunate shape that gave her this appearance.

Their Majesties told us that Queen Alexandra had felt her loss very keenly but was well. The King and Queen visited some area of the Aldershot Command every day, also the three hospitals, and took us with them. I remember that the last visit, in May 1914, was just after the Ulster trouble and the King brought Mr. Asquith, both as Prime Minister and as Minister of War. The Ulster trouble is difficult to de-



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scribe, as few people outside the army realised exactly what had happened. My husband, in his usual way, took a very active part in working for peace, and I claim that it was due greatly to his intervention and to the friendship Lord Haldane felt for him that the affair was smoothed over. The War Minister had resigned, and this was the reason that the Prime Minister accompanied Their Majesties as Minister of War. Owing to what had happened he was not very popular with many officers at Aldershot, especially the Irishmen. The King had brought amongst his household a young Irish boy who played a most amusing prank on the company at tea that evening and made us all laugh heartily. We were having a wonderful tea with every variety of cake, jam and so on, but of course only tea or coffee to drink. Suddenly the sound of corks being drawn was heard in the adjoining room. The anticipated wine, however, failed to materialise, and it was discovered that the sound had been produced by the Irish boy performing an amazingly good imitation of drawing corks. We all enjoyed the joke.

We had one rather alarming excitement—a fire at Government House. There had been a similar one when Sir John French was the Commander-in-Chief and in the same place, due to hot pipes being too near the woodwork. Our butler woke us up at about 2 A.M. by calling out, “The house is on fire”, a really horrible awakening! My husband was quite calm and went immediately to where the trouble was. The fire alarm having been given, he arranged that no troops were to come into the house but were to stand by. This order was given by him because in the last fire so much damage was done to furniture, by its being thrown heedlessly out of the windows. He then organised the men servants to hand him cans of water, and ordered the women servants to stay in their rooms. We hoped the children were asleep, and I instructed the nannie to keep an eye on them and told her I would let her know if they had to be moved. Douglas managed to pour

the water in such a way that he isolated the one blazing cupboard, and the whole thing was out before the fire brigade arrived. But there was meanwhile a funny little occurrence. Captain Charteris, A.D.C., had appeared in rather dirty-looking pyjamas and, when the fire was extinguished, the flooring was all burnt and we could see anyone passing underneath. Douglas spied Charteris just below and, out of pure mischief, seized the largest jug he could find and poured the contents all over Charteris's head saying, "A very good shot, and", he whispered, "that will clean him!" Captain Baird and myself, who were looking on, could not help roaring with laughter, which ended our experience rather amusingly, and we all went back to our beds quite happy.

During the latter part of June and the early part of July Douglas attended some French manœuvres at the Camp de Mailly, and at this meeting he came into close contact with the French generals who, in the war, held responsible commands in the French army.

I come now to the end of these happy days, when warnings of war came to us all at Aldershot. To me it was not a surprise, because ever since my marriage I had lived with the idea of war with Germany. The whole army had for long realised this and had remarked upon it many times, whenever we had any trouble at home, such as coal strikes; and I firmly believe and have heard many others say so too, that the trouble in Ireland caused the Germans to think that England would not come into the war.

When the blow came it was very overwhelming, though work kept the wives from grieving too much; but I shall never forget myself the troops marching past the gates of Government House at dead of night to concentrate at Southampton for their departure to France. I want to make special mention of the bravery of the wives and mothers at that time. Amongst them one never heard one word of complaint. Of course the sorrow of parting had been too

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deep to talk about. My husband's diaries give so clearly the description of their concentration at Southampton, their departure, Wassigny, the Retreat, the Marne, the Aisne and Ypres, and in the hope that his own words will be widely read by all, I will only give a brief outline of these days.





CHAPTER IX  
THE GREAT WAR  
1914-1918



## CHAPTER IX

### THE GREAT WAR

DOUGLAS and I decided that we would say good-bye quietly at home, and after an early dinner we went up to the children so that he might kiss them and tuck them up. As we came down he remarked that they were too young to realise what this parting meant. Captain Baird, his A.D.C., reminded Douglas that it was time to go, and they left by motor for Southampton. Before leaving, Douglas promised to write regularly and to send me a daily diary. This promise made me very happy, as I knew he would keep it and that I would always be kept in close touch with all he did. I received the following telegram from Southampton in reply to mine wishing him god-speed: "So delighted with your telegram. Very many thanks for all your good wishes which I feel will daily accompany me. Have just posted letter to you. We sail in *Comrie Castle* this evening. Good luck, and may all that is good surround you. Good-bye."

My husband and the 1st Corps embarked for France on the 14th of August, and I received a few words from him warning me that he had heard there would be some delay in getting letters back from the front and that I was not to be anxious. He had already written to me from the Dolphin Hotel in Southampton, where the 1st and 2nd Corps had concentrated before leaving for France. There was no doubt that in his letters he showed how sad he was at leaving me, but I was very proud when he expressed his admiration for my courage when he left. He said he knew he could depend on me caring for the wives and families at Aldershot, and that before leaving he had asked Xandra and Doria, our two little girls, to be kind to their mummy, and he expressed

his assurance that they would be a great comfort to me in the anxious days to come.

I heard from Douglas on the 19th of August that the 1st Corps was then concentrated at Wassigny, but he asked me not to make known where he was writing from until I read the information in the newspapers, so that the secret be kept until they had engaged the enemy. He enclosed a few leaves of his diary, giving details of their cross-channel journey and their arrival at Havre. He remarked that he had seen Sir John French (the C.-in-C.) that day and that Sir John seemed in the best of spirits and had told him that the French Generalissimo, General Joffre, was full of confidence.

His letters then stopped for about ten days, but I was not anxious owing to the warning that he had given me. The rumours flying about Aldershot, however, were very alarming. One newspaper special edition was published which seemed to indicate that our army had been surrounded and that the casualties had been enormous.

There was staying with me a colonel's wife who had, rather unwisely, undertaken to receive the telegrams announcing the losses in her husband's regiment. I shall never forget the arrival of these telegrams and our feelings of distress in the uncertainty around us. News of many other regimental casualties was being received daily, and of course the poor women thought that I must be getting news from the front. I felt it very much indeed that I could tell them nothing. As far as possible I dissuaded them from worrying the War Office, but when the newspaper report about the army being surrounded appeared, I paid a visit to General Cowans, a great friend of my husband. He was able to tell me that there was no truth in the statement.

Spies, too, were another source of anxiety. We were warned officially that the water might be poisoned and that in our households we should use only aerated or bottled

water. Curiously enough, I noticed at the Queen's Hotel the same waiter who had copied Douglas's map when we first went to Aldershot. As this waiter was constantly talking to soldiers, I thought it my duty to report the matter to General Hamilton Gordon, who had succeeded my husband at Aldershot, and he immediately had the man interned. At this time the wives of officers were very busy with the work of the Sailors' and Soldiers' Families' Association. This work entailed almost daily meetings at Government House. I received a warning from Lord Kitchener that all families living in barracks must leave in a week's time in order to make room for troops to be quartered there. I was in great distress of mind as to how to meet this fresh trouble, which had come sooner than was expected; but I was helped by the arrival of Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister, who called at Government House to enquire how we were getting on. He told me he felt very deeply for myself and the other wives at Aldershot. I took the opportunity to show him Lord Kitchener's order, and he took it back with him and arranged to get the time extended from one week to a month. This allowed us to make arrangements for a number of expectant mothers. The Louise Margaret Hospital was already being used for the troops, but the Red Cross came forward and helped me to form a splendid maternity camp where the mothers could have every care and attention and the babies become strong and healthy. The mothers were so grateful. We also organised an arrangement whereby any moneys paid to the wives living in barracks as marriage allowances could be banked for them in the Post Office Savings Bank and could be uplifted at the destinations to which they were going. The colonels' wives made arrangements for the unfortunate wives and children who had nowhere to go. Indeed, most of the responsibility and arrangements fell to the colonels' wives (and oh! how splendidly they faced all their difficulties), as they were in such close

contact with the wives of the men of their husbands' regiments.

I had my private worries too, at that time. Whilst we were meeting daily at Government House I had noticed a very peculiar smell, especially in the dining-room, where our meetings were held. The drains having been wrong not long before the beginning of the war, I felt that the trouble was recurring and so I packed my two small girls off to North Wales to be under the charge of my twin sister. After calling in the help of the Royal Engineers, however, I found that the trouble was due to dead rats. Our butler, before leaving, had, with the best intention, put down rat poison, but it was not the right kind and the animals had crawled into crevices in the walls and behind the central-heating gratings to die. The trouble having been discovered, it was not long before all the corpses were removed, but it was far from being a pleasant business. I decided in the end to leave my children in Wales, and they remained there for nearly three years of the war. At the time I missed them bitterly, but it was all for the best, because I soon received news that I must vacate Government House.

I had a lot to do in those days, what with all the S. & S.F.A. work, which no one else was willing to undertake, and in addition I had already begun the arrangements for organising the Empress Eugénie's hospital. Douglas had always felt a great liking for the old lady and we had often been to see her, and when he went to say good-bye before leaving he had promised the Empress Eugénie that I would organise and run a hospital for officers in her house. The Empress, directly she heard from me that I would be leaving Aldershot, insisted that I should go and stay with her. This was a solution of the difficulty and I felt most grateful for her kindly consideration. I spent a whole year with her, and I think that the officers thoroughly appreciated the care taken of them. We had some very serious cases, and many

operations took place in the little theatre which I arranged by converting one of the bathrooms in the house. With the nurses, I did my daily job of work too, cleaning the theatre and dusting, preparing swabs and all sorts of odd jobs. I did all the ordering of stores for the hospital and paid all the bills. I was helped in the actual ordering of food by a friend of the Empress. This work was a great help in keeping me from worrying.

I was greatly indebted to the commandant of the Red Cross, Mrs. Guise Moore, for allowing me the services of two of her hospital-trained nurses. This gave me a start, and after a week or two I got the regular nurses from Sister Agnes and so all went very smoothly. In addition to the specialists we brought down for serious operations, I had Dr. Attenborough, who was on Red Cross work, acting as resident. Dr. Attenborough was always most efficient and most considerate to the patients. Sir Thomas Galway was our "head". I must give the following lines, which are rather amusing and which were composed by one of the patients, and show, I think, that they were quite happy although most of them were so seriously wounded.

### ON OUR BOARD

Sir Thomas came in with a humph and a haw  
And a grunt as he fiercely pushed open the door.  
"Your name and your Corps", he immediately cried.  
"Wheatly, West Riding", I demurely replied.

He puffed and he blew till I got in a stew,  
Then turning round quickly, said, "What's wrong with you?"  
His assistant bent over a blue paper sheet,  
And wrote down at his orders—"Two frost-bitten feet".

He followed this up with a gruff interjection,  
Which I judged was "occurred" merely by the inflection.  
"Wulverghem, sir, on the road to Messines".  
"Spell it", he bellowed, to the sound of faint screams.

## THE MAN I KNEW

The source of these screams he thought rather vague,  
And turning, looked daggers at poor Lady Haig.  
He said, "That will do, have you got any more?"  
"Yes," she replied, "we've another next door."

I'm glad in a way that he's such a loud talker,  
For I heard every word that he said to friend Walker.  
He asked the same questions he'd just asked of me,  
So his knowledge of Medicine was slight I could see.

Then he talked of the wool that my friend had his feet in,  
And blurted, "That's nothing but wool steeped in cayenne".  
He ragged Lady Haig on the use of this cure;  
But she did not know it was German I'm sure.

As he passed by my room on his way to the car,  
I again thanked the Lord that his voice carried far;  
For I heard Lady Haig say, "What will they receive?"  
"Oh, I think to begin with they can have two months' leave."

Now that the hospital was in full swing, I had to get the S. & S.F.A. off my hands because I could not have combined the two. I had formed an emergency committee of those who had worked with me and had enlisted some civilian assistance. The timely help of the clergy and those working amongst the women who had been off the strength since before the outbreak of war, was very valuable, and it was fortunate that I had been in touch with them through a meeting which Douglas had arranged for me to hold some time before the war. We had arranged that a list of the reservists' wives should be kept by the clergy of all denominations. Thus when war broke out we were ready and each wife was looked after at once.

In the early days of the war, during the retreat, the officers who came into the hospital were terribly worn out and tired. They slept and slept, poor things. The journey from Flanders in those days was very trying and very, very rough. The railways in France were not yet organised to the perfection they reached soon after. At that time these



officers gave me great consolation, for one and all spoke to me of my husband's kindness to them. At the beginning of the war their maps were not good and it was difficult for them to locate the place to which official orders directed them. They would describe to me how my husband would stop and talk to them, at once creating in them a feeling of friendliness. He would talk over their difficulties and mark their maps, explaining how they could reach the spot to which they had been ordered.

Meanwhile I gathered from what Douglas let me know that his troops had been through a terrible time. The first writings that I had from him told of the "retreat". He spoke of the wonderful co-operation of his staff officers and, in his usual way, gave all the credit for the success and safety of the troops to those who were working with him rather than to himself. His admiration for his troops was unbounded, but he felt very bitterly the hardships that they had to endure—little or no sleep for days and nights on end, boots worn into holes, blistered feet—and he described how vehicles were banked on the sides of the roads to allow those of greater importance to pass, and how tired men were brought on in what lorries could be spared. He wrote from the line, and I was able to realise a little of what was going on at the front and better able to understand what the officers at the hospital told me and how the newspaper report which had worried us all at Aldershot had come to be written, although it had given a much exaggerated account of what had actually happened.

In his letters Douglas would continually thank me for my words of praise and admiration of what he himself was doing, but he invariably tried to make out that he had done nothing and that the success attained was entirely due to the remarkable work and loyalty of his staff. He said that they did everything and saved him much worry, especially his chief staff officer General Johnnie Gough, although he

and all the army were very depressed by the constant retreat.

Douglas's letters were now coming a little more regularly, and he always enclosed a few leaves of the diary which he had promised to keep for me every day, but explained that there could be but few pages owing to the rapidity with which they were retreating. He had little enough time for sleep, let alone for sending letters to me, but it is interesting to note that these hastily written pages of Douglas's diary turned out to be the only comprehensive record of that early part of the war.

The next time I heard from him his troops were still on the move, but the Germans seemed to be beginning to fall back somewhat. This I gathered was the beginning of the battle of the Marne. He finished that letter by remarking that he could hear a good deal of firing north of the Aisne, which might mean that the enemy were making a stand.

Douglas's headquarters were now at Moulin le Bas, and from there I heard the full details of the retreat and the battle of the Marne. The 1st Corps was still having a very bad time, but had made a splendid crossing of the river Aisne, special mention being made of Generals Lomax and Bulfin. The 1st Division, holding a position on the Aisne, was being shelled from all sides, whilst the other parts of the army were coming into line. The Germans seemed to think their artillery could do everything. However, our men, in spite of the cold and wet, and the difficulties in cooking their food, were holding their positions with great determination. Mention was also made of the difficulties of the staff during the retreat. Organisation was much hampered owing to the shortage of roads at their disposal.

About this time I heard from Sir Clive Wigram, private secretary to the King, saying that probably my husband's diaries would in future go direct to Buckingham Palace and would be passed on to me afterwards. This worried me very

much, because I knew that my husband could only write his thoughts to me alone and that his descriptions and expressions of opinion would be much curtailed if he had to send the diaries to others than myself. I wrote to Douglas expressing my sorrow about the matter, and a very forcible reply came back at once, saying that he had arranged to send dictated reports to His Majesty but, as regards the diaries, they were written for me alone and he intended to continue to write them for me. This decision was very satisfactory, and I was so glad he was determined to continue sending me the diaries.

In the middle of October Douglas and the 1st Corps moved to St. Omer prior to the beginning of the first battle of Ypres. His letters were now full of descriptions of the poor Belgian refugees flying in terror from the Germans. General Lomax had been wounded at the Hooge Château, by a shell landing in the Château. Douglas himself had left the Château the previous day, so that General Lomax, who was thoroughly tired out after all that he had been through, might have the best quarters and obtain all the rest he could possibly get. At the beginning of November my letters were full of the terrible fighting around Ypres. Douglas seemed very much concerned for his men, who were becoming very tired, fighting all day and digging trenches all night. General Bulfin had also been wounded. Douglas had already mentioned how helpful General Bulfin had been to him during the battles of the Aisne, and he again stressed the General's remarkable consistency and determination. He wrote that he could not have succeeded so far had it not been for his valuable help.

During the bitter fighting in November, the 1st Corps were attacked by a mixture of the whole German Army, including their crack regiment of Guards. Douglas deplored the huge losses amongst his troops, but the Germans had lost more heavily. He hoped that his men would soon be

relieved, and deprecated the cold and wet that they had to endure owing to the condition of the trenches. I wish my readers could read for themselves the diaries describing the precautions Douglas took to safeguard, as far as was humanly possible, against the hardships of these wet trenches, and of the care he took that the trenches were properly sited so that the enemy could not turn their guns on his men.

At last his hope was realised, and the relief of the 1st Corps by the French troops began on the 15th of November and was completed on the 21st. After the relief of his troops, Douglas had intended to stay and organise the supplying of new units and to supervise personally the training and all other details so necessary after such desperate fighting as his Corps had been through. Sir John French, however, sent for him and asked him to go to the War Office in London, to see Lord Kitchener about details of supplies which were then so necessary. He also informed Douglas that he had made up his mind to form the two corps into two armies, and that he, Douglas, was to command the First Army and Sir H. Smith-Dorrien the Second Army. He wished him to let Lord Kitchener know about this and gave him papers dealing with the subject to take with him.

Douglas telegraphed to me and came on at once to 21 Princes Gate. His sister Henrietta had hoped very much that his first visit might be to her. I had expected Douglas to look very, very tired after all that he had been through, but he appeared alert and very cheerful considering the great responsibilities that had been laid on his shoulders. He visited the War Office daily, to talk with Lord Kitchener, the Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith) and His Majesty the King, and in what little time he could spare for me we would go for a game of golf together and he would then put aside all the weighty matters which so burdened his mind. I had arranged for our two girls to be in London during

Douglas's leave, and their presence gave him great joy. He loved to take them to places of amusement and on his last afternoon went with them to the Zoo. I think Douglas was almost as disappointed as the children when they found the monkey-house locked up, but all three thoroughly enjoyed their visit.

He managed, also, to spend one afternoon with the Empress Eugénie, and when he looked over the hospital he was distressed to see what little use was being made of it at the time. The Empress begged him to put the matter before the War Office, and I am glad to say that through his speaking to General Slater the wounded officers began to come more regularly. The Empress was very kind to him and told him that I was such a comfort to her during these anxious days. Douglas replied that he was quite sure I would be a comfort to her, but he pointed out all that she herself was doing for our officers, particularly as she had insisted on taking no allowance from the Government, as was usual at that time in the case of hospitals taking in wounded. Douglas advised me to get the officers to apply for their lodging and fuel allowances, to which they were entitled, as the Empress was claiming nothing.

Notwithstanding the many calls on his time, the change had done Douglas good and he seemed to have enjoyed the days with me. In the beginning of December the King visited the troops in France and Douglas dined with him. His Majesty told Douglas that he had seen me at the Empress Eugénie's hospital and had chaffed me about pretending to be a hospital nurse!

It was about this time that Captain Baird left Douglas to join General Rimington as G.S.O.2. Captain Fletcher took his place. Douglas was always particularly fond of Captain Baird, and he felt his going very much.

The battle of Messines had started, but the 1st Corps did not take part except to send some troops to the aid of

Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien when he was in great difficulties. During this period we at home were having experience of air raids and the east coast towns had suffered considerably. Just before Christmas the 1st Corps had suddenly been called upon to help the Indians at Givenchy and they arrived just in time to retake some very important ground. All this time Douglas had been sending me maps marked by him, so that I could follow exactly the movements of his Corps. Naturally I took special precautions to preserve and keep secret all these maps and diaries, and Douglas continually thanked me for taking such trouble over his "stupid opinions and stories", as he called them.

On the 26th of December, on becoming commander of the First Army, he handed over the command of the 1st Corps to General Monro. The 1st, 4th and Indian Corps were the composites of his army. The 4th Corps was commanded by General Rawlinson and the Indian Corps by General Willcocks. Douglas was glad that the 1st Corps was still under his command, though only indirectly now, because they had never failed him, though at moments it seemed impossible to win through. Their record was indeed one to be proud of, and he appreciated to the full the privilege he had had in commanding such brave men.

The shortage of shells and other ammunition at the end of the year 1914 caused much anxiety, but the War Office appeared to be doing its best to increase supplies and had sent to the front several specialists to find out at first hand what was really required. On the 31st of December Douglas concluded his letter to me by saying that "dear old Sir Pertab Singh was waiting patiently in a chair for lunch", and being the last day of the year he wished me every happiness that the New Year could bring.

Many congratulatory letters were received by Douglas on his appointment to the command of the First Army, and

the press was full of flattering accounts of his ability and achievements. When I chaffed him that his head would be turned, he replied that I need have no fear of that. The main thing was to do one's best to beat the enemy, and the problem of how best to accomplish that end was enough to keep any man fully occupied. On the 11th of January he was decorated with the order of Grand Officier Légion d'Honneur. He was very proud to receive the honour, but remarked that the British soldier did not fight for decorations but for his country. He pointed out that people at home were just beginning to realise the effect of the stand made by the 1st Corps at Ypres. In his opinion it saved England. If this stand had not been made, the Germans would have reached the Channel ports and made the work of the Navy well-nigh impossible.

General Hobbs came to see me while he was on a few days' leave and I showed him all Douglas's diaries, which I typed out myself as they were received. On his return to France he paid me such a nice compliment, which Douglas duly passed on. He told Douglas that I was a splendid secretary and that "really nothing could be more business-like than the way I had all his papers and diaries arranged". Douglas said that he knew better than anyone else what I did and that I deserved the praise many times over.

I had presumed to congratulate Douglas on his plans for attacking "the triangle", but whilst he thanked me for my congratulatory remarks he again gave all the credit to the staffs of the 1st Corps and 1st Division. He allowed, however, that he did insist on thorough preparation and reconnaissance beforehand and that, thanks to such preparation, they had taken "the triangle" observation post without the loss of a single man. They had, however, to retire from the post three days later.

All through the war, no matter how busy he was, Douglas never failed to demand to know all about the

children and how they were getting on. He showed a remarkable interest in all their little ailments, and at one time found fault with the nursery-governess for putting too much into the children's heads regarding what they should write to him. He was overjoyed when he received what he thought were their own productions, and got lots of fun from the quaint misspellings that some of the letters contained.

After the battle of Givenchy, preparations had been begun for Neuve Chapelle. Douglas was particularly anxious to ensure that the artillery preparation would cut the wire properly. He paid many personal visits to his troops in various areas to see that they were not being kept too long in the trenches without a rest and that they were being properly fed. When the preparations for Neuve Chapelle were nearly completed, General Johnnie Gough was offered the command of a division at home. He wanted to refuse it and to stay with Douglas and see the arrangements for the battle through, but my husband pointed out to him that in the position offered he would have more chance of showing his abilities as a soldier. They went together to see the Commander-in-Chief and extracted a promise that Gough's division would be brought to France as soon as ever possible. A few days after he had decided to take Douglas's advice, General Gough was lunching with his old regiment (the 2nd Rifles) when a stray shot caught him. This happened in a place that was thought to be quite safe. Douglas was dreadfully upset over the death of General Gough. He told me of his anxiety when Gough was being operated upon in an attempt to save his life, and how his poor wife arrived just in time to get the news of his death. The loss of this brave and fine soldier meant much to the whole country. Of course, as a wife, I was anxious about Douglas himself, and these stray shots brought home to me the uncertainty of life anywhere at the front, but he reassured me by writing that I need have no anxiety and that he was most careful. General Gough's



place was taken by General Butler, who had previously worked quite a lot with my husband.

Thanks to the artillery preparations which had been made with such care, the first results of the battle of Neuve Chapelle were very gratifying. Douglas was quite pleased with the day's work. Neuve Chapelle had been taken and the troops were attacking the Bois de Biez and Aubers. Knowing that I would be anxious, he wrote me on the 10th of March, the day of the battle, and again on the 11th. Apparently he was a little disappointed with the advance and remarked that the day was cloudy and not good for artillery observation. However, the Commander-in-Chief had called to congratulate him and his troops on their great success. On the 13th he wrote again. He was very distressed that, after the first surprise of the enemy and the capturing of Neuve Chapelle, the advance had been held up, owing to some wire not being cut. Many casualties had been caused and he sadly mentioned the numbers of our killed and wounded to date—"and so many good fellows too", he added. The Germans, however, had had a very bad time too. His letter of the 14th thanked me for praising him, saying that no praises were more valued than mine. Many French generals had been to see him to congratulate him on the artillery firing. A week later Douglas came home on five days' leave.

We spent this leave at Folkestone and, as I felt certain that my husband should have a quiet time, I arranged for us to go to lodgings under the assumed names of "Colonel and Mrs. Brown". This proved to be rather stupid and unnecessary, because all the time he received despatches from the front and my secret did not last long. We managed to have a quiet time together, however, and I enjoyed having him quite to myself. Sir Clive Wigram wrote to ask whether Douglas would be going to London, as His Majesty would like to see him. I took it on myself, however, to write firmly that I insisted that he stayed the few days at Folke-

stone, and I received a very kind letter in reply saying that the King quite understood.

I had an amusing letter from Douglas just after the 1st of April in which he told me how his staff had played tricks on each other. The Intelligence Officer had been the chief butt. Also an airman had dropped a large football on the German lines, with a ticket attached on which was written "Only the 1st of April!!" The football as it floated down to earth must have created much excitement and made many German "April fools".

General Lomax had never recovered from the shock he had received at Hooze Château and a very serious operation was necessary. His recovery, unfortunately, was not expected, and I was very distressed to hear, a few days later, the news of his death. My husband too felt his loss very deeply, for, as I have already mentioned, General Lomax did noble work for his country during the early days of the war and he stood very high in Douglas's estimation.

Things seemed much quieter in front of the First Army, although daily raids had always been part of the programme to sap forward gradually into the enemy's trenches. I received a letter about this time written by Lord Haldane, in which he expressed his opinion that my husband had done magnificent work and that his leadership had made a deep impression everywhere. Lord Haldane also remarked that he had been told that the German Emperor had recently said to someone in Berlin that the 1st Army Corps, under the leadership of General Haig, had outshone any other, either in the East or West. I felt that it was a great compliment to my husband and his army corps to be thus picked out by one who could certainly recognise a good soldier, and had for many years beforehand directed the German preparation and training for war.

In a letter dated April 24th, Douglas told me of the Germans having been concentrated round Ypres. They attacked

the Second Army, commanded by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, and on the 22nd of April, for the first time, asphyxiating gas, said to be chlorine gas, was used by the Germans. It showed first as a large yellow cloud, which drifted down over our trenches.

The German operators evidently wore special respirators to protect themselves, and the neighbouring German troops wore cotton masks soaked with a liquid supposed to be bicarbonate of soda. The French territorials were terrified and were driven from their trenches. The Canadians, too, suffered much, but after the first alarm returned and recaptured the guns they had lost.

As a result of the unexpected use of gas much ground was lost, and troops from the First Army were sent up to assist Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien. Ypres still remained in our hands, however, and things gradually improved. Arrangements were at once taken in hand by Douglas to secure supplies of suitable gas-masks. The women, who had been so useful with disinfectant baths, again came forward and concentrated on the making of these masks, and many at home worked at them also. On hearing from me of the terrible ordeal the troops had been through, the Empress Eugénie ordered a very large consignment of special masks to be sent to France.

On the two occasions Douglas had been home he thought that the work of the hospital was telling on my health, and many letters came from him asking me to give it up. I found this a little difficult, however, as the Empress was so kind to me and she seemed to like me running the hospital for her.

Early in May, Douglas told me that he was anxious that the allied armies should combine in an early attack because, should the Germans take the initiative, the Allies would have to conform to what the enemy did. Italy came into the war with us about this time, and many were the opinions expressed as to the effect her entry would have.

## THE MAN I KNEW

On July 9th (my birthday) Douglas arranged to take a few days' leave. Alan Fletcher, his A.D.C., had very kindly offered us the use of the small house that he and his wife, Lady Theresa, had taken at Westgate. We had a most happy time there, and found the house beautifully arranged for us. As Douglas remarked to me, even sealing-wax, pencils, paper and ruler were provided; but of course Alan Fletcher knew exactly what my husband used in this respect. We played golf every afternoon, mostly at Sandwich, and in the mornings we walked along the sea-front and watched the bathers.

During this leave I had a letter from Colonel Wigram, saying that for Imperial reasons it would be a good thing if Douglas were to see His Majesty whilst he was at home. I showed the letter to Douglas, and he at once wired to Wigram that if His Majesty wished to see him he would go to London the next day. We had rather a difficult time, because Douglas had let his batman, Secrett, go away on leave, and we were not quite sure where exactly Secrett had put his uniform. I always remember searching high and low for his things, but we succeeded eventually in getting him properly turned out!

On his arrival at Buckingham Palace, Douglas was handed a note from Colonel Fitzgerald, private secretary to Lord Kitchener, saying that Lord Kitchener wanted Douglas to lunch with him at York House. Douglas, however, had promised to meet me at the Cavalry Club and knew that I would be waiting there, so rather than fail me he arranged to call on Lord Kitchener after lunch. His Majesty was very kind to Douglas and thanked him for making this effort to come to London. He then handed him the G.C.B. and collar, saying that no one had more thoroughly earned the honour. We had a very happy lunch together at the Cavalry Club and then Douglas went for his interview with Lord Kitchener, while I filled in the time by calling on my sister at

Marlborough House. From what Douglas told me of the interview, he and Lord Kitchener seemed to have been much in agreement.

I waited for my husband at Carter's shop in St. James's Street, and we took great trouble over a new forage cap which I insisted on his getting, and other necessary clothing of which he was in need. We got back to Westgate about seven o'clock.

One day while we were sitting on the front we had rather an amusing experience. I knitted all Douglas's ties, as he would wear no others. I used a very simple plain and purl stitch, which made a thickness only sufficient to make a single tie. On this occasion I was knitting a tie, when a fashionable-looking lady—as Douglas called her—came up to me and asked full details as to how I made it and where I bought the silk and so on, Douglas looking on much amused. The lady explained to me that she wanted to make a tie for her boy! Douglas said that he thought me most good-natured in the way I gave her all the instructions that she wanted.

On his return my husband found that things were again quiet on his front and he suggested that perhaps the Germans wanted to smash the Russians on the eastern front and then arrange for terms of peace. Preparations were being made for Loos, and, as at Neuve Chapelle, these preparations were begun some time before the battle.

My husband had rather deprecated the choice of Loos as the place for the offensive, but he had to conform to the wishes of General Joffre and the Commander-in-Chief. He took special precautions, however, to see that his troops were protected against casualties as much as possible.

I had promised Douglas to leave Farnborough Hill Hospital, so I finally decided to do so about the middle of August. I was very, very sorry to leave the Empress. At first she was very hurt with me and could not under-

stand why there should be any difficulty. She pointed out that she had always supported me as head of her hospital. I tried to tell her that there were difficulties. First, that as the wife of my husband I was placed in a peculiar position; second, that I had my two children to consider; and third, that my husband thought that the long journeys to the children and the hard work in the hospital were too much for me, and this worried him. I was very touched by a charming letter she wrote me afterwards in which she said she looked at my empty place at table and greatly regretted my absence.

On the 15th of August 1915, Douglas reminded me that it was exactly a year since he landed at Havre. Lord Kitchener visited the troops about the middle of the month and lunched with Douglas, and they discussed the question of conscription. Kitchener did not seem to be at all in favour of compulsory service although Douglas and the corps commanders were all in agreement that it would be the best thing. Douglas pointed out that if we introduced conscription it would show our Allies that we were really in earnest and would also have a demoralising effect on the Germans. It appeared, however, that the question was largely political and if we had compulsory service then Mr. Asquith could no longer remain Prime Minister, and Lord Kitchener did not want a change in the Premiership.

Before Kitchener arrived Sir John French had sent for Douglas, and in the course of conversation they had agreed to tell the Secretary of State for War as little as possible about the attack that was being prepared for the following month. It was felt that Kitchener would *have* to talk about the plans in the Cabinet, and that from there they would spread all round London and reach the ears of the Germans long before the attack was due to take place. Douglas always felt that the politicians never realised the importance and necessity of secrecy in regard to future plans, and as soon

as any plans were discussed in the Cabinet they might just as well have communicated them direct to the enemy. This state of affairs explains why the army leaders at all stages of the war disapproved so strongly of the Cabinet being informed of the plans for future attacks. Douglas thought Kitchener looked harassed and felt sorry for him. He, a soldier, must have found great difficulty in dealing with the politicians.

At the end of August I decided to take the children to Westgate and Douglas promised to try and find time to run over to see us, but he pointed out that he was very busy. The Commander-in-Chief was not at all well and had been obliged to keep to his bed.

During the preparations for the battle of Loos, Douglas had pointed out to the Commander-in-Chief that no fresh reserves had been allowed for in the event of the enemy being surprised and a break-through accomplished. The Commander-in-Chief did not pay any attention to my husband's recommendations, and though the battle of Loos was at first a very great success, our troops were again held up through lack of reserves. It was at Loos that our army used asphyxiating gas for the first time. Having been told beforehand that gas was to be used, I remember so well on the morning of the battle watching a weather-cock at Westgate, where we were then staying. The use of gas necessitated the most careful preparations, and for the first time a weather specialist was brought to headquarters, so that it could be known beforehand what kind of wind might be expected on the day the gas was to be released. In the early morning the wind seemed unfavourable, and Douglas with Alan Fletcher, his A.D.C., climbed a tower overlooking the sector. Alan lit a cigarette so that, from the smoke, my husband might see the way the wind was blowing, and when the true direction showed itself my husband then gave the order to start.

## THE MAN I KNEW

It will be remembered that after the first battle of Loos there were many criticisms about the reserves not being brought up in time to help when the break-through had been almost accomplished, and my husband was blamed for this. General Howell, who had been with my husband as his Chief Military Officer in India, came to see me and drew my attention to these criticisms. He had heard at a dinner the night before some young officers discussing the matter and my husband was greatly blamed by a young cavalry officer, who said that the roads were all encumbered and that the cavalry had no chance. General Howell expressed a wish to get a letter through to Douglas at once, to ask him to state the facts regarding reserves so that the Prime Minister would realise that Douglas was not to blame. My husband, however, had already sent the facts to the Commander-in-Chief. Unfortunately Sir John French did not at the time put the true story in his despatches, but the Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith) wished to hear my husband's own version of the matter and it was then brought out that Douglas had pointed out beforehand the necessity for these reserves being at hand and in a position to operate at the critical moment.

Douglas's meeting with Sir John French over this matter was a little painful. Sir John offered to show him the letter that he proposed to write when he forwarded all Douglas's letters to the War Office, but Douglas was of far too forgiving a nature to consent to this. He considered that Sir John should write whatever he thought right and just, and all he wanted was that the true facts of the case should be sent to the War Office. In spite of this difference of opinion Douglas wrote me saying how sorry he was for Sir John and referred feelingly to the long uninterrupted friendship which had always existed between them. He thought that the army would only suffer if there was friction between them, and that any further discussion of the subject would



be petty in comparison with the real work of the war which occupied all his time.

Soon after the battle of Loos His Majesty again visited the Front, and unfortunately on this occasion had a riding accident when riding one of my husband's mares, which had been carefully trained and made accustomed to the sounds of cheering. At one point some of the soldiers in their enthusiasm had waved their caps just in front of the mare's eyes. This was too much for her and she reared. The ground being wet she fell and came down on top of the King. There was grave anxiety, as His Majesty might have been very seriously hurt. Douglas felt the responsibility very much because of the fact that it was his mare, but the King very graciously sent word that the fault was in no way his.

After Loos Douglas considered that the position of the Allies was more favourable than at any previous time. He seemed to think that the Germans were in a bad way, but he feared a peace being made too soon.

Owing to the bad effect the frequent air raids were having on the children, however, I decided to take them back to Wales, but I could not bear to be myself so far away from active work. I therefore took a service flat at St. James's Court. This I thought would be handy for Douglas when on leave or when he had to come to London to attend meetings at the War Office.

After my work at the hospital I found my idleness heavy on my hands, so I at once started looking round for something to do. After helping for some time at the Queen Alexandra Field Force I decided to offer my services to St. Dunstan's. This work, however, was interrupted for a short time while I took the children to the east coast for a change, but the air raids there were again very disturbing. Before I took the children back to Wales we had a wonderful view of a German zeppelin coming down in flames. The raid was at night and the darkness all round was in-

tensified by the dazzling shafts of the searchlights. First one found the airship and in a moment all the other beams were directed to that spot and lit up the giant monster. We could see our aeroplanes quite plainly darting here, there and everywhere, and hear the deafening roar of the engines and the rat-tat-tat of the machine-guns overhead. Then there was a crash and a great burst of flame and the burning zeppelin roared down to earth—then silence. The sight at first reminded me very much of our last tattoo at Aldershot, when our two airships, “Beta” and “Gamma”, along with a number of aeroplanes, took part in the performance for the first time.

On my return to London I resumed my work at St. Dunstan's. The courage and patience of the blinded men was very wonderful. At this time also I used to go in the evenings to the hut by Victoria Station where I helped with the cooking. I had taken lessons, and these stood me in good stead. Lady Babington, an old and very dear friend, had told me that she had difficulty in getting assistance. I volunteered to do what I could to help, and under Lady Babington's guidance, she being an excellent cook herself, I managed quite well. The hut was for officers arriving from the front. Coming into such close and constant contact with these men I gradually learned of some of the problems that faced many officers and ex-officers. I began to make this my special work, for few seemed to realise their difficulties. I concentrated on establishing a fund to assist disabled officers, and in this work I was greatly helped by my friend Mrs. Cazalet. She was much better at begging personally for donations than I was. She took me to see Sir Ernest Cassel, who gave me a very generous cheque, and very wisely advised me to appoint a treasurer and put my fund on a properly organised basis. I shall always remember our visit to that poor old man. He was a German by birth, and all those whom he had helped so liberally and entertained

so lavishly in the past had quite deserted him on account of his nationality. He was just a lonely old man in a huge house, and yet he was so fond of the English, with whom he had spent most of his life. His cheque and the spirit in which it was given showed his real concern for the disabled officers whose cases I was pleading.

There was a great deal of writing to do in connection with this work. Mrs. Cazalet undertook to tackle the business firms at first and I approached the Mayors and Provosts. It was very difficult, though, to make others realise that nothing had been organised for officers and how necessary such a fund was. Glasgow responded to my call splendidly. Sir Thomas Dunlop, who was Lord Provost at the time, at a luncheon on the day he received my letter explained the position and called for donations. The result was that he and his family headed a very generous list of donors, and so through Glasgow and Sir Ernest Cassel the activities of the Disabled Officers Fund began. This fund still forms the Disablement Branch of the Officers' Association with some of the original members of my committee still working there.

Douglas came on leave on the 21st of November and I met him at Folkestone, where we spent the night. We went on the next day to Princes Gate, where I had been staying for a short time with Douglas's sister and her husband, Willie Jameson. Willie had not been very well and Henrietta had been rather anxious about him, so he was not up to welcome Douglas when we arrived. After lunch I walked with Douglas to the War Office and in the evening he went to 10 Downing Street to see Mr. Asquith. After their discussion the old man very kindly invited Douglas to lunch next day and to bring me too. Looking back, I do not think Douglas enjoyed that lunch very much because he sat next to Mrs. Asquith, and her tirade of questions, certainly very astute and clever, just bewildered his calm Scots mind.

He must have felt very embarrassed and he did the only thing possible under the trying circumstances. He simply left the questions unanswered, casting many a worried look across the table to me.

During these few days in London most of the time was spent at the War Office or Downing Street, but fortunately we had arranged to go to Wales for some part of Douglas's leave to see our two girls. Early in the morning of the day we were leaving for Bangor Sir William Robertson arrived. I can remember him so well walking up to the front door looking terribly serious and holding on to a small attaché case. He told Douglas that Sir John French had not been at all well and that he had decided to resign. A successor was to be selected at once and he believed that the choice lay between Douglas and himself, but that he personally felt there was no doubt that Douglas was the right man. He hoped himself to be made Chief of the General Staff. He was returning to Sir John that day and would let Douglas know anything that might transpire.

We had a great reception when we got to my Uncle Walter Vivian's place at Bangor. The children were at the door full of excitement, because they had not seen their father since his first leave in 1914. Douglas thought they had grown almost out of recognition, forgetting that a year makes a very big difference in children of that age. Uncle Walter arranged to go on business to Scotland so as to leave us alone with the children and he only returned the day before we had to leave again. We spent most of the time walking with the children, though we had a few games of golf. The course, however, was unkempt and the ground frozen, so that play was not very pleasant. On Sunday we took the children to the little church at Menai Bridge, where Douglas was much touched by the text of the sermon. I found he had noted it in his diary—"Take heed that ye walk circumspectly—the mark of the Christian is *love*".

"We must all be kind to one another and loving, there must be no jealousy", was entered by Douglas as the context of the sermon. Afterwards we walked to Vaynol Park, which unfortunately was now nearly all shut up. Douglas and I had both loved Uncle Charlie Assheton-Smith, the former owner. He was the kindest soul imaginable and we had many memories of happy days spent at Vaynol. We went into the little memorial church where he lay. His wife had had two beautiful marble angels placed one at each side of his tomb, and we were very impressed by the sad beauty of their faces as they looked down. A lamp was kept burning and this added to the effect.

Uncle Walter on his return was very anxious that Douglas should take part in a game which he loved to play with our second girl, Doria. She had a funny cloth doll which had been given to her at Aldershot just before war broke out. She loved it very much and dressed it as a boy and called it "Douglas". Uncle Walter would hide it, declaring that it had run away to fight, and when it turned up again, it would be most effectively covered with bandages. Doria was a little afraid that *her* Douglas would want to go away with her father and so she kept him assiduously beside her. We slipped in to her room after she was asleep to take the doll away, but the child had tied it under the bed-clothes to her bed to prevent anything happening without her knowledge and Douglas had not the heart to take it.

On our return to Princes Gate we found Willie Jameson much better and able to be downstairs. Henrietta had invited his doctor, Gwynn Lawrence, and our great friend Percy Chubb, an American whom Willie, Henrietta and Douglas had known for many years, to dinner, and we had a very happy evening.

The next morning Lord Kitchener sent for Douglas and told him of the possible resignation of Sir John French. Kitchener had just returned from Gallipoli and had been

terrified at the unfavourable position of our troops there. He mentioned that an immediate withdrawal was necessary. He also spoke about the Salonika expedition, about which he was much troubled. Like Douglas he was not at all in favour of it, but the French had dragged him into it, and altogether it was most unsatisfactory from a military point of view. It meant keeping 85,000 troops in Salonika. Kitchener also told Douglas that the Germans were preparing to invade Egypt and were extending their railways. An attack, therefore, must be expected in that part and 100,000 men would be required for defence. He was very anxious about numbers of garrisons, transport of provisions and other matters of importance which were going to be difficult to arrange. Douglas told him of some experiences in those matters that he had had, and Lord Kitchener then asked Douglas if he would help him to work out a scheme, saying that a room in the War Office would be put at his disposal and that he could call upon anyone whom he thought could assist him. So Douglas postponed his return to France for three days and went daily to the War Office.

Of course these days we got no golf, but Douglas found time to visit Queen Alexandra, who, alas, he thought had aged considerably and become deaf. As always the Queen was sweet and kind. Princess Victoria and the others there just crowded round Douglas and made a hero of him.

The draft scheme for Lord Kitchener was finished and signed by Douglas in two days' time. When Lord Kitchener was saying good-bye to Douglas he told him that he was recommending him for the post of Commander-in-Chief and had in fact already written to the Prime Minister. He then discussed various details that were necessary regarding the command of the armies in France and parted with Douglas wishing him success in his future work.

Henrietta, Willie and I saw Douglas off on the 4th of December. It was windy and I heard from Douglas after-

wards that they had had a terrible crossing and arrived very late at his headquarters.

A few days later Douglas wrote to me that he had heard that Sir William Robertson had been appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff. In the same letter he told me that the Prime Minister had sent him a very complimentary letter offering him the post of Commander-in-Chief. At the same time he mentioned that he was proudest of *my* congratulations already sent to him and that he appreciated very much the words that I had used. He hoped that, after the tests that he had been through during the retreat and the fighting of 1915, the experiences gained would help him greatly in the heavy task before him. I was deeply touched by his saying that it had been such a comfort to him since August 1914 to have me to confide in and that I had already proved that his trust was not misplaced. A day or two after, Douglas sent me the Prime Minister's letter and also a charming note from the King to preserve carefully with his other papers.

On the 19th of December 1915 Douglas took over command of the Expeditionary Force in France and moved into General Headquarters at St. Omer on the 20th. He felt keenly handing over the command of the First Army and said good-bye with regret to all who were not accompanying him. They had all worked together so well and happily and were imbued with the one common purpose—to do their duty and end the war as quickly as possible.

If one can judge by the kind letters and congratulations that were showered on Douglas his appointment must have been received with a feeling of great confidence throughout the army. Such trust was of great importance in view of the bitter fighting which was still in front of our troops.

Soon after his appointment Douglas received the highest grade of the Légion d'Honneur—Le Grand Cordon. He sent me a delightful letter at the end of the year in which

he reviewed the anxious times that he and his troops had been through and again stressed how much it had meant to him receiving *my* letters.

Meanwhile I was staying at my flat in St. James's Court. Douglas wrote a very amusing letter to me when I told him of certain arrangements that I proposed making for his next visit. He said that "the special grilled cutlet", "the silence about his coming home" and "the special lock on my writing-room door" made him long to come to the flat at once.

He was at that time seeing a lot of General Joffre, whom he described as "a dear old boy". Joffre seemed to like his visits. Douglas spoke specially of a very important meeting at Chantilly when future plans were made for an attack on a large scale by all the Allies. I should mention that directly Douglas took over his new duties he instituted weekly meetings with his army commanders over which he presided. These meetings took place alternately in the different areas of the army commands. He felt that this would keep his army commanders and himself in much closer touch.

On one occasion when I was dining with Willie Jameson and Henrietta at Princes Gate a charming young lady was the only guest besides myself. She seemed very talkative at dinner, but the remarks that she made astounded me. She gave out that she was in possession of a vast amount of information concerning the military operations in France, and tried hard to give me the impression that in the past she had been on the most friendly terms with an important member of the staff. She also appeared to have stayed a great deal with a Mr. M——, an American friend, who was very rich and entertained lavishly even during the war. She seemed very anxious to make friends with me and must have thought that she was impressing me by disclosing all that she knew. I was appalled, however, by the so-called secrets that she let out so lightly and directly she left, before going home, I wrote down all that she had said and showed



it to Henrietta who verified it. I sent the notes to Douglas asking whether such a dangerous person should not be watched, but he was merely amused and called me a regular "Bozzy" pointing out to me that there was no great danger so long as she had not the entrée to G.H.Q.

At the end of January 1916 Douglas had his first visit from Mr. Lloyd George, who was accompanied by Mr. Bonar Law, to discuss the question of munitions. Thinking that Mr. Lloyd George would like to see his two boys who were at the front, Douglas had very kindly asked them to stay for the night so that their father could have a talk with them. Douglas formed the opinion then that Lloyd George wanted, if at all possible, to put the soldier in the wrong, and this side of his character was clearly shown over the question of munitions.

During their visit it had been arranged to show the ministers the battlefields, including the battlefield of Loos. Douglas did not accompany them, and had hoped for a quiet day to allow him to get on with his work. On their way to Loos, however, Mr. Winston Churchill, who was in command of a battalion in the line, met them with the news that Sir F. E. Smith, at that time Attorney-General and a member of the Cabinet, had been arrested the night before for travelling without a pass. Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Lloyd George were horrified to think that a Cabinet minister should be treated in this way and they gave up their visit to Loos and hurried back to G.H.Q. Meanwhile Douglas had heard of the arrest from his Adjutant-General, who told him that F. E. Smith had been found travelling in a colonel's uniform without a pass and his subordinate had only done his duty in placing him under arrest. Since Douglas had taken over command he had insisted on tightening up the regulations regarding passes to the front. The Attorney-General had apparently been on his way to spend the night with Winston Churchill when he was

arrested and taken to St. Omer, where he had been confined in a hotel. When the ministers came back they were full of excitement and Douglas thought it best to send for F. E. Smith, who came to lunch with them, and Douglas was rather shocked at the amount of his best brandy that Sir F. E. consumed. After lunch there was a terrific argument. The ministers wanted an apology from the Adjutant-General, but Douglas pointed out that this was impossible as the A.G. had only carried out *his* orders. The ministers gradually calmed down when they realised that no one need hear anything about it. They had all threatened to resign from the Cabinet if it became known that such an indignity had been paid to a Cabinet minister. Finally everyone swore to keep the matter secret and Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Lloyd George and Sir F. E. Smith left G.H.Q. quite happy with the intention of forgetting the whole incident and keeping it entirely to themselves. However, the whole story appeared in the evening papers, so one of them must have given the show away immediately after reaching London.

Mr. Lloyd George intimated that he would not be able to produce all the ammunition promised for March till July. Douglas had already made his plans for an offensive in the spring and he wanted to be prepared to follow up a decisive attack for three months if the opportunity offered itself. If, however, Lloyd George was not going to be able to meet the requirements, Douglas thought that the best thing for him to do would be to state how much ammunition he could provide by a given date and Douglas would then alter his plans to suit. Douglas felt that this method was rather like putting the cart before the horse.

Douglas was anxious that a simultaneous attack should be made along the whole front by all the Allies, so that a constant pressure would be brought to bear on the Germans. The French, however, did not like the idea of attacking north of Ypres whilst the Germans had so many men in

reserve in that quarter. General Joffre's suggestion was that Douglas should make a number of preliminary attacks so as to wear down the enemy and reduce his reserves to nothing, but Douglas pointed out that to do this would have a very bad effect on the morale of not only the troops themselves but on the people at home and the neutral countries and would seriously damage our credit, as a repulsed attack, even though that attack had never been intended to break through, would appear as a victory for the enemy. He also pointed out that such attacks would wear out his troops as much as those of the enemy and he would be without the necessary men when the principal attack was made. Meantime Joffre was very anxious that Douglas should take over more of the line held by the French so that he could strengthen his reserves. It was clearly the politicians in Paris who were hampering Joffre in the matter of attack. One section which dealt with home defence thought one way about it whilst the bureau dealing with operations abroad were of the opposite opinion.

It was eventually decided that the offensive should be launched at two adjoining points and Douglas altered his plans to fall in with this idea. It meant that there would be only two flanks to protect instead of four if the points chosen had been at different sections of the line.

Douglas visited the King of the Belgians in the company of Lord Curzon, in order to explain the intentions of the Government with regard to matters which closely concerned Belgium. King Albert, who was at that time living in a small villa on the sea-coast within range of the German guns, had asked that Douglas should accompany the Cabinet minister at this interview. His main concern was that many houses and much property in Belgium would be destroyed if an attack was made from a certain quarter in preference to another, and he thought that plans should be laid so that as little damage as possible would be done.

Meantime the enemy appeared to be concentrating opposite Verdun and the French became very anxious that Douglas should take over some of the line held by the French Tenth Army. Douglas, however, was averse to doing this before it was definitely established that the Germans did actually intend to make a big attack there, but he promised that the British troops would support the French as far as lay in their power, whenever the necessity arose. He was afraid that if he weakened his support by taking over part of the line held by the French the main German attack might be launched against the British troops, and in their weakened state that might be disastrous.

However, the attack by the Germans was launched at Verdun about the 21st of February, and as the fighting increased in that quarter the need for the relief of the French Tenth Army became imperative, and Douglas ordered the relief to start on the 23rd. Joffre did not think this attack was intended to be or could possibly in itself be a decisive action, but he was of the opinion that it was the beginning of the supreme movement of the war, and he wanted large mobile reserves, including his Tenth Army, so that he could rush them to the sector on which the threatened attack eventually fell.

Douglas came to London to see Lord Kitchener on the 25th of February. Kitchener had evidently grown anxious about the situation, but Douglas was able to reassure him and explained the whole matter. He pointed out, however, that they must be prepared to face the fact that the French, after the affair at Verdun, might be unwilling to undertake a vigorous offensive owing to lack of reserves and ammunition, and if this should happen he thought the best thing he could do would be to get the French to take over some of the line to hold in a passive way so as to set free as many troops as possible and take the offensive himself on a large scale on the front between Ypres and Armentières. If, how-

ever, the French were prepared to adopt a more offensive attitude Douglas thought that his best policy would be then to attack alongside them on the Somme. On the other hand, the French might possibly turn the fighting at Verdun into a successful action, in which case they would be much encouraged and it would be his duty to strike while the iron was hot and attack vigorously at once on a wide front.

Lord Kitchener agreed with all the views put forward by Douglas at this meeting and I was waiting for him at the War Office when he came out. When we arrived at my flat in St. James's Court, Douglas was very delighted with all the arrangements I had made for his comfort and we spent a quiet evening together. The following day Douglas spent all morning and most of the afternoon at the War Office. He was anxious to get all units made up to full strength and pointed out the necessity of having this done at once if we were going to make a success of any offensive which might be begun in the immediate future. He also pointed out very forcibly how much he was being hampered by want of labour for roads, railways and docks. In the evening a telegram came for him from G.H.Q. stating that the French had abandoned a considerable area at Verdun. He therefore decided to return to France on the following morning, so I saw him off at Charing Cross at 9 o'clock by special train. Just before he left Sir William Robertson arrived at the station with a telegram from Joffre. It appeared that the fighting round Verdun had intensified and the Germans were using large reserves in an effort to break through the line. Joffre was anxious that Douglas should hurry on the complete relief of the French Tenth Army so that he would have sufficient troops at his disposal to check the German attack. He, however, seemed fairly optimistic. He wrote Douglas a long letter which he received shortly after he reached G.H.Q. The Germans had been shelling very

heavily round about Verdun, and a French colonial division, which had fought well on previous occasions, had not stood up to the shelling and had retreated, laying bare the flanks of the neighbouring divisions and this had caused the big falling back of the French with heavy losses while the German losses were almost negligible.

Meanwhile the relief of the French Tenth Army was progressing and Douglas, on hearing that the front line was in a bad state of repair, thought it best to decide where the surest line of defence was and strengthen that, holding if necessary what had been the French front line by a series of outposts only. He did not consider it was advisable to waste lives trying to recapture points which had recently been lost by the French.

On the 28th of February Douglas motored to Chantilly to see General Joffre. The old man was evidently very pleased that Douglas had come to him so soon after his return and thanked him profusely for what he had done in the way of relieving the French Tenth Army. Joffre was feeling much more confident now. He told Douglas that he had ample reserves and that the divisions that had suffered so badly at Verdun had been withdrawn. He was sure that the fresh troops which had taken their place would be able to hold their own and he was all prepared to launch a counter-attack as soon as the Germans showed signs of exhaustion.

Douglas had always felt that the French Government took too much to do with military matters in the field and talked to Joffre on this subject. The latter agreed but said that in the last week or so they had changed very much and now gave him quite a free hand. At Joffre's suggestion Douglas went to Paris and had a talk with the British Ambassador, Lord Bertie, who seemed to be out of touch with the military world. He told Douglas that there was little chance of change in the French Government but that

Joffre might be replaced by a younger and more energetic man.

About a week later Joffre changed his mind again and suggested that the British troops should attack all along the line. Douglas felt that there were far too many people all trying to advise Joffre, and when his advisers changed so of course did his plans.

On the 8th of March Lord Derby arrived at G.H.Q. for two or three days. Douglas had invited his two sons to stay also, while their father was there. Douglas wrote me saying what a fine man Lord Derby was and how he wished there were more like him in the Government at such a time of crisis. Everybody at G.H.Q. liked him because he was so straightforward.

A few days later Douglas attended a conference of all the allied commanders-in-chief held in General Joffre's house at Chantilly. This meeting was of great importance for it showed to the neutral countries and the world in general that the Allies were working in real unity. It had been called principally to ascertain what each country was able and prepared to do. Douglas's descriptions of the discussions that took place were very interesting and so amusing—he could so often see the funny side of things. All the representatives with the exception of Joffre had much to say. Douglas thought some spoke too much but they all complained of a shortage of heavy artillery and machine guns. They seemed to expect France and Britain to supply their needs but could only promise to undertake small local attacks in return!

After the conference General Joffre told Douglas that he thought March and April would be the most critical months of the war.

Douglas was very anxious about future plans. Much depended on the situation on other fronts as regards the number of divisions he would have at his disposal. At that

time his command consisted of four armies and a reserve corps. The latter was commanded by General Hubert Gough.

On the 17th of March Douglas decided to move his headquarters from St. Omer to Montreuil, and Alan Fletcher was detailed to make the necessary arrangements so that the move might be accomplished as soon as possible. Beaurepaire Château, about two and a half miles out of Montreuil, was chosen for Douglas's new G.H.Q. and he moved there on the 1st of April. He little realised then that he would occupy that château through the remaining anxious days of the war and that the only statue erected to his memory by his French comrades as a tribute of admiration and personal affection would be put up in the Grand Place at Montreuil.

In one of his letters Douglas mentioned that he was arranging to have his staff officers to dine with him. He proposed to invite them all in turn to show them that he was personally interested in them as individuals. Only the very senior officers had dined with the Commander-in-Chief during his predecessor's time.

At this period Douglas spent much time visiting the different sectors of the line and inspected many units, including the 3rd Canadian Division. He was delighted with the spirit of all ranks, who were looking forward enthusiastically to going into the Salient because they would then be the nearest of our troops to Berlin! And this was in spite of the fact that the losses at Ypres from artillery fire were very heavy and the Guards alone had lost forty casualties in one day. He found the same spirit of enthusiasm when he inspected an Australian brigade some days later.

Douglas issued directions for the training of cavalry divisions which had been placed under the orders of his army commanders: one division to each army with one division in reserve. He firmly believed that if there was a



break in the line, cavalry and mobile troops should be at hand to make a *bridge head* beyond the gap until relieved by infantry. This would enable any reserves which the enemy might bring into action, to be broken up.

Douglas's attention was drawn by Mr. Runciman to the serious shortage of merchant shipping necessary for the transportation of munitions and other commodities vital to both the French and British armies. It was suggested that the shortage was caused by so many ships being used to carry stone and timber to France for the trenches and that the matter would be rectified if Douglas arranged for the provision of these materials from local sources. Douglas pointed out that his difficulty in carrying out this suggestion was the shortage of labour amongst the troops. He required all the available men for fighting purposes as the army was still very much below strength. At a meeting some days later, a representative of the Director of Contracts at the War Office suggested that Douglas should use German prisoners for the work, and he agreed to try the idea with a thousand prisoners, but insisted that their guards should be sent out from home and not drawn from the forces in the field. He learned at the same time that the munition workers at home were not really doing a full day's work, and he concluded that the real trouble was that the Government was afraid to tackle the labour problem at home in a proper business-like manner.

On the 25th of March General Cadorna dined with Douglas and, on behalf of the King of Italy, presented him with the Grand Cordon of the Order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus. Douglas liked the General and had a long talk with him about the part that Italy was playing in the war, and tried to impress on him the importance of all the Allies participating in the general offensive at whatever moment it might be decided on. He was very anxious that Douglas should pay a visit to the Italian front. Douglas politely

declined the invitation, pointing out that he was really too busy at the moment but that after the war he would be delighted to accept!

Douglas continued his many visits to the units under his command, and was delighted to find that the officers and men eagerly looked forward to his visits. He was frequently asked to come back again soon. The men liked to see their commander-in-chief, and all ranks felt that they were being thought about and considered.

Towards the end of March a rather delicate situation arose between the British and French Governments which necessitated Lord Kitchener going to Paris. It appeared that we wanted to withdraw our troops from Salonika whilst the French were opposed to such an action. The meetings in Paris became very strained indeed and Kitchener was most concerned about the whole matter. He suggested that the British Government should write definite instructions to Douglas, but the latter asked that this action should be postponed in the meantime. Kitchener then agreed to leave the matter in Douglas's hands on the understanding that if he was in any doubt how to act he would at once go to London to consult him.

Training and preparations for the contemplated attack on the Somme were now proceeding, and Douglas emphasised to all commanders the necessity of having all operations carefully planned in every detail and rehearsed if possible beforehand.

Douglas crossed to England on the 13th of April and I met him in London when he arrived. We went straight to my flat in St. James's Court. He went to the War Office in the afternoon to see if he could get some information about the drafts he might expect during the summer months, as this was a matter of first importance in view of the offensive which he had in mind. There was still a lot of diversity of opinion amongst the politicians regarding universal service,

and Kitchener was very worried as to where the number of men that Douglas asked for could be obtained. However, after the matter had been gone into, Douglas was advised that his units would be at full strength by the middle of May and that the required drafts could be arranged for in June and July. He was very relieved to be informed that there appeared to be no reason for postponing the date of the attack on account of man-power.

Experiments had been made with tanks and Douglas had allowed in his plans for their use. Of course, this matter had been kept very secret and it was not definitely established whether or not they would be used. He learned that 150 of them could be provided by the end of July, but pointed out that this would be much too late and that if they were to be used at all he would require about 50 by the 1st of June. He also supplied maps of the ground over which they would be used so that a training ground could be laid out to allow the crews to practise taking the tanks over obstacles and wire similar to what they would experience when they actually went into action. He emphasised very strongly the necessity of devising some system of leadership and control with a view to manœuvring.

Douglas's visit only lasted four days and he returned to France on the 17th. He travelled by the ordinary leave boat, which was very crowded owing to leave having been stopped between the 18th and the 25th. This stoppage of leave was on account of the inability of the railways to deal with the Easter holiday traffic at home as well as the officers and men coming on leave from the front. Douglas wondered what the future historian would write about Great Britain when it was learned that during the greatest crisis in her history the inhabitants insisted on taking their usual Easter holidays and by so doing postponed the leave of the soldiers from the seat of war. Who can tell how many were never to enjoy that well-earned respite?

Shortly after Douglas returned to France he received a number of French journalists who had been on a tour through the British lines. They were very delighted with their visit, and thanked Douglas for the very cordial way in which they had been received everywhere by the British. Douglas pointed out the importance of their doing all in their power to unite the French and British, as it was only by the united efforts of the two peoples that the war would be won. They thoroughly agreed and left him with their minds made up to tell the people of France of the great efforts that the British troops were making.

During May there were minor attacks and counter-attacks by both sides all up and down the line. Douglas was anxious to continue making raids so as to gain information and to prevent the enemy knowing what his intentions were. The Germans, on the other hand, appeared to be becoming suspicious and several fierce and well-prepared attacks accompanied by the use of gas were made. The fighting at Verdun had quietened down very considerably, and the French were beginning to launch counter-attacks there just to show, as Joffre told Douglas, that they were far from being beaten or disheartened by the losses they had sustained in the earlier part of the battle!

Towards the end of the month General Joffre came to Douglas's headquarters to discuss the situation. Douglas would have liked to wait until possibly the middle of August before starting the combined offensive for which they were preparing. This would have enabled him to have all his divisions and units at full strength with no fear of being short of reserves, and the troops would have more time to become thoroughly trained. General Joffre, however, was afraid that if the attack was postponed till such a late date he would have very few of his army left, so Douglas agreed to commence operations on or about the 1st of July. He

pointed out, however, that once a date was agreed upon he did not want it postponed at the last moment and it was finally agreed that they would decide the actual commencement three weeks in advance of the attack.

Having advanced so far in the preparation of the proposed combined offensive by the French and British troops on the Somme, Douglas had now to think seriously of making plans for an operation of sufficient magnitude to mislead the enemy as to the real point of attack, and it was essential that such operations should be ready to take place by the end of June. He instructed that all counter-attacks, however, should be made with as few infantry as possible but well supported by artillery so that the loss of life would be reduced to the absolute minimum.

Douglas had to come to London again on the 6th of June for an important meeting at the War Office. General Joffre and the French Premier were also present. Immediately on landing at Dover Douglas was shown a telegram by the Military Landing Officer which reported that Lord Kitchener and his staff on H.M.S. *Hampshire* had been drowned.

Douglas's arrival was very unexpected and I had only been advised by telegram of his coming. My children had just arrived the previous evening from Wales and I had arranged to take them to Deal a day or two later. Meanwhile they were to have stayed in my flat, which was so tiny that I had had to make arrangements for them to sleep in the dining-room. Everything, therefore, was in rather a chaotic state when I heard that Douglas was coming. To get over the difficulty I decided to rent an adjoining flat which happened to be vacant, and was just moving in his clothes, prior to walking to the station with the children to meet Douglas, when I heard the excited voice of a lady asking to see me at once. Alan Fletcher's wife then rushed into the room and informed me that our husbands had been

drowned. I simply cannot describe my horror at hearing this news. Without waiting to ascertain where Lady Theresa had obtained her information, I telephoned direct to the War Office and was informed by Sir George Arthur of the tragic news about Lord Kitchener. I am afraid that my relief was so great I could only exclaim "Thank God". I learned afterwards that Lady Theresa had simply read the newspaper bills, and knowing that Douglas and her husband were crossing from France, jumped to the wrong conclusion and came straight to me. This delay made us late for Douglas's arrival, and he was almost leaving the station when the children and I met him. Douglas fully realised how much Lord Kitchener's death would mean to him personally, and he knew he would miss his help in directing the councils of war at home.

For the next three days Douglas's time was almost entirely occupied with conferences at the War Office and Cabinet meetings. He was also sent for by the King, who had a long talk with him. His Majesty was evidently very upset by Kitchener's death.

On the 9th, however, we left London for a short stay at Deal, where we managed to have a few games of golf. A very funny incident concerning our two daughters occurred while we were there. We had taken them for a walk and were resting by the sea, leaning against some rocks while the children played near by. We suddenly became aware that as people passed they stared at Douglas with more than ordinary interest, and we were rather surprised because usually he was passed almost unnoticed. Happening to look up, I noticed chalked in large letters on the rocks above our heads "THIS IS SIR DOUGLAS HAIG". This of course was the work of our little monkeys.

I accompanied Douglas on the morning of the 12th of June to Dover, where he met Admiral Bacon and his staff, and after lunching with the Admiral and Lady Bacon,

Douglas left for Folkestone, whence he returned to France.

Douglas returned to France on the 12th. The Germans had again increased their activity against the French at Verdun, and General Joffre signified his anxiety by asking Douglas to put forward the date of his attack in order to relieve the pressure against the French. Douglas, however, considered that it would be the worse possible move to run the risk of weakening our attack by commencing it before the troops were fully prepared for it, and he thought that the best solution would be for the French reserves behind the Somme to be moved to Verdun to strengthen the position there. He pointed out that even if our infantry attack was launched on the 25th of June, as suggested by Joffre, it would be too late to check any vigorous attacks made by the enemy with new troops at Verdun. He was, however, quite prepared to attack on the date mentioned if General Joffre considered it absolutely essential.

Douglas learned that a certain amount of trouble had arisen at Verdun amongst the French troops, some of whom had become disheartened by the renewed attacks of the enemy, and the capture of Verdun seemed certain. The French Higher Command, however, took action at once and fresh troops were brought in and the whole position strengthened. This had the effect of raising the spirits of the French, and the position became so satisfactory that Joffre suggested postponing the attack until the 29th of June. This Douglas agreed to.

The German offensive at Verdun again showed signs of finishing and the French began to withdraw some troops from that front in order to relieve the Tenth Army, which was south of the Somme. This enabled them to have a much larger reserve behind the impending attack.

M. Briand came to visit Douglas and the British front about the last week of June—four or five days before the

attack. He was much impressed by all he saw and told Douglas that he had had no idea of the tremendous organisation of the British army.

All this time preparations were proceeding apace for the big attack on the Somme. Douglas was determined that nothing should be left to chance. Not a day passed but he was in close personal touch with corps, divisional and brigade commanders, hearing their views, learning of their difficulties and advising them as to the best way of carrying out the general plan. The weather, unfortunately, was all against him. Rain fell incessantly and many trenches and gun emplacements were full of water. In spite of this, however, everyone was optimistic and full of hope.

The French were continually asking Douglas to postpone the attack as they did not think they would be ready with their preparations in time, but Douglas did not want any postponement if it could possibly be avoided. He pointed out that any delay in launching the attack would be apt to demoralise our own troops, and give the enemy more chance of discovering our plans and making their preparations to defeat them.

Meantime Douglas had issued instructions to all the divisional commanders to arrange for constant raids and small attacks along the whole front so as to make the enemy believe that we were not contemplating anything in the way of a larger offensive. Information had come from Germany, and had been confirmed by prisoners taken during these raids, that the High Command there were confident that the British troops would not attempt an offensive on a large scale, and it was Douglas's intention to foster this confidence in the mind of the enemy so that when the real attack started there would be as big an element of surprise in it as possible. He made arrangements for the cavalry to be in readiness so that, in the event of the Germans being surprised to a greater degree than he had hoped, it would be



possible to push our success to its absolute limit. Douglas never believed in making plans only to reach a certain fixed objective. He realised that in a big attack there was always the possibility of the enemy being found weaker than anticipated, or not prepared for the method employed in the attack, so that a break-through might occur. His plans were, therefore, carefully laid to meet such a contingency. His feelings were that if he was prepared for a break-through and the opportunity offered itself he could then take full advantage of it, but if a break-through was not achieved then no harm would have been done. He did not want another Loos!

Eventually the attack had to be postponed for forty-eight hours on account of the heavy rains, which had made the ground in such a state that it was quite impossible for the gunners to put down an accurate barrage.

During his visits to the various units just before the attack Douglas was very gratified to find the men in such splendid spirits and so full of confidence. Many told him that they had never before been so instructed and informed of the nature of the operation before them, and that the wire had never been so well cut nor the artillery preparations so thorough.

The battles of the Somme, fought mainly in villages and woods, now sacred to us by the memories they hold, started on the first day of July. The enemy was taken quite by surprise and, after an intense bombardment, our troops crossed his front line trenches everywhere on a front of sixteen miles. The morning was fine and sunny with a slight ground mist which helped to conceal the preparations. The infantry attack began at 7.30 A.M. and for the following hour and a half satisfactory progress was made. The Montauban-Mametz spurs and villages and the Schwaben Redoubt, an important ridge north of Thiepval, were attacked, but the enemy retained possession of Fricourt, although they were

surrounded on three sides. They hung on, however, and it was impossible to dislodge them from the village. This was the first check, and the advance was necessarily held up until the enemy could be driven out and the villages of Ovillers and Thiepval, which were also still held by the enemy, taken. To the north of the Ancre too, there was heavy fighting, especially round the village of Serre. Douglas, however, was very pleased with the early successes of the morning and pointed out that on such a wide front the struggle was bound to be severe and long-drawn-out. He visited General Rawlinson, the Fourth Army commander, and impressed on him the necessity of taking Fricourt, and on the following day began the desperate attempts to capture the village. Attacks were also made on La Boisselle and Thiepval. Douglas paid frequent visits to the army, corps and divisional commanders and congratulated them on their successes. He was particularly pleased with the work of General Rawlinson and of Generals Horne and Pulteney. He also visited some of the casualty clearing stations and found the wounded men wonderfully cheery and in good spirits.

Fighting continued fiercely round La Boisselle and to the south of Thiepval and considerable ground was gained north of Fricourt. The total casualties for the first three days' fighting were about 40,000. Douglas was at first much concerned by the seemingly high figure, but he discovered that it included a great many lightly wounded cases which in other armies would not have been evacuated at all. Well over 4000 prisoners were captured during the first phase of the attack.

Douglas was visited by Generals Joffre and Foch, who discussed with him their future plans. An argument arose as to the advisability of carrying out Douglas's suggestion of pressing an attack on Longueval. Joffre thought it was more important to capture Thiepval Hill first, and was not at all

in favour of Douglas's idea. He finally came to see Douglas's point of view, however, and agreed to co-operate in whatever he thought to be best, remarking that it was a British battle and that great things were expected of Douglas.

The Russians had begun their offensive the previous day north of the Pinsk Marshes and intended to continue on the south of these marshes against Kovel. Douglas thought that an attack of this kind by one of our Allies would press the enemy still further both as regards men and ammunition and would improve the general situation in the West.

On the 4th of July, although the early morning was fine, the weather broke and later in the day there was a heavy thunder-storm which lasted nearly all the afternoon. Severe fighting continued round the village of La Boisselle and the woods of Barnafey and Trones. Douglas kept in very close personal touch with General Rawlinson and his corps and divisional commanders, discussing with them what had occurred and helping each with his particular difficulties. He impressed on them the necessity of taking Trones Wood to cover the flanks at Contalmaison. He urged the need of hastening the capture of the wood before the enemy could strengthen its defences. By the 5th of July the 15th Corps had taken Quadrangle Trench but had failed to capture Mametz Wood owing to intense machine-gun fire. Peak Wood, however, at the cross-road south of Contalmaison, had been captured. The enemy launched many counter-attacks against the British trenches opposite Thiepval but they were successfully repulsed. At a meeting with Generals Rawlinson and Gough commanding the Fourth and Fifth Armies, Douglas decided that the Fourth Army should try and extend its front to Trones Wood and to attack Mametz Wood and Contalmaison preparatory to an advance on the Longueval-Pozières Ridges.

On the 6th of July the 3rd Corps captured the "Horse Shoe" trench, a thousand yards of ground south of Contal-

maison, and took a great number of prisoners, but Mametz Wood, on the 15th Corps area, still remained in the enemy's hands. Generals Foch and Weygand met Douglas to discuss the co-operation of the 20th French Corps with the British 13th Corps. Foch assured Douglas that his troops would do all that was possible to support him in his effort to secure the Longueval Ridge, and in the meantime would try to take Hardecourt and Knoll to the north and help the British by putting a barrage in front of Guillemont. The King sent Douglas a telegram expressing his pride in his troops and asking Douglas to convey his congratulations to the army on the results they had achieved in the fighting.

The 7th of July was stormy and wet but the attacks took place as planned. The start was again very successful, and by noon Contalmaison and Bailiff Wood with about 700 prisoners had been captured. A foothold in Ovillers was gained and a further portion of the Leipzig Redoubt was carried. Unfortunately, however, Mametz Wood was not taken. The fighting continued fiercely round Contalmaison village, Trones and Mametz Wood and Ovillers village, and Douglas, in consultation with General Rawlinson, began to prepare for an extended attack on Longueval and Pozières.

The weather latterly was bad and the sodden ground had greatly increased the difficulties of moving the heavy guns. Douglas, however, was fairly satisfied with the results, because he wrote to me on the 10th that large numbers of enemy formations had been broken up and that the Germans were using up their reserves as they arrived, which gave some indication of the great losses they had sustained. It was not until the 12th of July that the whole of Mametz Wood was captured. Desperate attempts were made by the enemy to recapture Contalmaison village and Mametz Wood but they were all unsuccessful.

Douglas's final preparations had been made for the oc-

cupation on the 14th of the line from Longueval to Bazentin le Petit, and he proposed to take High Wood and establish his right flank at Ginchy and Guillemont. He also intended to attack Pozières Ridge and if possible capture the village of Martinpuich. Douglas consulted the corps commanders about all his proposals and was very pleased to find them full of confidence of success. The bombardment, which began at 2.30 A.M., was very heavy, and even at G.H.Q. Douglas's room was brightly illuminated by the reflections from the bursting shells. The infantry attack about an hour later was preceded by five minutes' intense bombardment and was absolutely successful. By 9 A.M. all objectives had been taken.

The cavalry were called out to try and capture High Wood, but the ground was so slippery that it was difficult for them to advance and the infantry were therefore ordered to take it after it had been heavily bombarded by the artillery, and fierce fighting continued all day. Douglas congratulated General Rawlinson on the splendid work of his army, and hearing of the heroism of a hundred men of the West Kents who had held on alone in Trones Wood for 48 hours, decided to publish their names and give them all decorations. General Foch expressed great admiration for what the British troops had done, and Douglas himself must have been very pleased because I received a telegram sent about 9 A.M. telling me that the attack had been very successful and that everything had gone like clockwork. Later Douglas wrote saying that his troops had completely surprised the enemy and had captured some four miles of the second line. The tremendous success can perhaps be realised by the fact that Douglas considered it the best day's work during the whole war up to that time. He was sure that the results of that day's fighting would be far-reaching, and felt very proud of the privilege that was his of commanding such fine men who had proved themselves

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far superior to the enemy. During the night the positions taken were consolidated and strengthened to meet the anticipated counter-attacks which were sure to be made on the following day.

Douglas was very pleased at receiving a delightful telegram from General Joffre, who seemed to appreciate fully what our troops had accomplished. A great number of German prisoners had been taken and many of the officers amongst them had felt very sore at being captured. Two of them had even tried to commit suicide, one by swallowing the glass of his watch and the other by opening a vein. One elderly officer, however, showed his appreciation of the British troops by informing everyone within earshot that he thanked God that he had been taken by such a chivalrous foe.

I have tried to give some impression, as my husband gave it to me, of the beginning of the Somme battles, but the fighting raged continuously around the same places for many weary months and I must pass quickly over this period. I shall try to refer to any particular change that took place on the battle front, as I proceed with more intimate details of Douglas's story.

About that time I had noticed that most of the newspapers, both French and English, were taking a very marked and rather special interest in Douglas himself. I had commented on this in one of my letters to him and his reply was very typical. He said that he had had to submit to interviews of every description. Senators and others from Paris and people from the War Office were sent for help in their work of propaganda in the neutral countries. I was not to think, however, that he was turning into a self-advertiser. Although he could not stop personal stories creeping in, he supposed that their inclusion in the articles were meant to give them a human touch. He remarked that my views on the subject were very much what he himself

thought, and again pointed out that it almost looked as if we had been reading each other's minds. He had many times before commented how, just as he had been thinking of something, I had written to him on that particular subject.

Amongst those who were active then writing about Douglas was the great Lord Northcliffe himself. Up to this time Douglas had always tried to avoid him, but he had been sent out officially to G.H.Q. Douglas was very amused at a further letter from me asking him why he had changed his front with regard to Lord Northcliffe. He explained the necessity of his complying with what was required of him and that he had found Lord Northcliffe very different from what he had expected. He was really anxious to help the army and the war. Douglas did not scold me for my presumption in writing to him so persistently about the press and mentioned that he too had been much exercised in his mind whether or not to receive Lord Northcliffe.

I myself had a funny little experience with the press at my flat in St. James's Court. During those days of the war when we all had our food rations the cooking at St. James's Court was so bad that I did most of my own. I kept my food coupons and bought my own provisions. I was busy preparing my evening meal and was armed with a cauliflower when the bell of my flat started to ring. Fearing an invasion by the press, I had given strict orders that no one was to be shown into my flat until the hall porter had let me know by telephone the name of the visitor. I was therefore quite certain that the unannounced bell-ringer was sure to be a member of the press and, looking out cautiously from the room I was cooking in, I made furious signs, behind the visitor's back, to the lift-boy to come and speak to me. I peremptorily ordered the boy to take the man straight down and reported the matter so that it might not happen again. In a short time the young enthusiastic corre-

spondent sent up his card asking for an interview. He represented the *Daily Mail*. I refused, politely, to see him, but the gentleman was very persevering, and having discovered that at night I was alone in the flat, knew I would have to answer the telephone myself. That night the telephone bell rang and, when I lifted the receiver, to my astonishment a voice announced that Lord Northcliffe was anxious *to write up my husband* and that an article was all ready showing how I received news from him, and would I let the speaker know how my letters reached me? I was furious at the idea that my husband needed any writing up, especially as I knew how much he hated anything of the kind, but I hid my temper and simply stated that my letters came in the ordinary way and that in any case I could not see how the manner in which I received news could affect an article writing up my husband. I added that I read the news of the war in the newspapers, including the *Daily Mail*, and that the proposed article could not possibly be published! I heard no more of the incident, and Douglas was much amused when I wrote to him about it.

Amongst the *human touches* brought up about Douglas in some of the newspapers was the mention of children in his headquarters. I chaffed him in one of my letters about this and said that he had not mentioned them and asked who was the charming mother. Douglas's reply was very funny. He told me that the lady was over seventy and had sixty-four grandchildren, and he drew comparisons with what he called "ye fashionable ladies of England". The old lady had done her duty to her country by having fourteen children herself, which accounted for the huge number of grandchildren. After he had explained the matter, he told me that I had better not ask such foolish questions again about the family living in his quarters, and that I should think instead of how many of this large family were fighting in the French army against the enemies of civilisation. I



was still puzzled, however, because, though the grandmother figured so largely, I wanted to know something about the mothers!

On the 8th of August the King arrived to visit his troops and stayed at Douglas's house at Cassel. During His Majesty's visit Douglas gave a big luncheon party at his headquarters at Valvion to meet the King and Monsieur Poincaré, the French President. Generals Joffre and Foch were amongst the guests. No wine was drunk and Douglas was much amused at Joffre's look of horror when he was offered the choice of lemonade or ginger-beer. After lunch the King presented Douglas with the G.C.V.O., mentioning that it was given to show his own personal appreciation and in recognition of what he had done for the Royal Family. I well remember how deeply touched Douglas was by the gracious and most generous words in which His Majesty expressed his personal feelings of gratitude.

After the King had left for Cassel, Douglas discussed with Generals Joffre and Foch their future plans, and all three agreed that an attack on a wide front was necessary. Joffre had been much troubled by the appeals from Russia for more vigorous fighting on the western front. It was decided that Douglas should advance on the front between the Somme on his right and High Wood on his left. The date for this attack was provisionally fixed for the 18th of August, but of course the actual date would depend on the progress of the French army.

Although much occupied with the King's visit, Douglas was able to keep himself in close contact with the fierce fighting which continued, and I was very touched that in the midst of all his worries (which included a visit from Mr. Lloyd George) Douglas did not forget in his letter of August 14th to remind me that it was exactly two years since he left Aldershot for the front, and remarked that General Rice too had remembered and had congratulated

him on passing through the two years so successfully. Douglas spoke of the struggles during these two years that our country had had for her very existence. He felt that Germany had now a similar struggle to contend with. She was in much the same condition as we were in 1914. I was very gratified when Douglas again told me how my letters had cheered and comforted him, and stressed that all through the anxieties his thoughts had always turned to me.

Before returning to England His Majesty sent Douglas a very nice letter of thanks. Douglas commented that few of the many guests that we entertained at Aldershot were so prompt in writing.

There were many criticisms going on about this time in political circles and also by some of the generals whom Douglas had had to send home. It was said that very little ground had been gained and that our successes could not justify the large number of casualties. It was even suggested that the reports of the fighting were too optimistic. Although these condemnations reached Douglas, he was quite unperturbed by them, for he knew that he had done all that was humanly possible to safeguard the lives of his men and that the *wearing-out* battles must take place. He knew well enough how disheartened the enemy were becoming. In fact there were already rumours of the enemy trying to obtain peace terms with one of our Allies. A dangerous possibility for us! Douglas was prepared to come home at any time as soon as he felt that he had not the confidence of the War Cabinet. He was asked to send to the latter an appreciation of the Somme battles, which was circulated to the members of the Cabinet. The result of this was that Douglas received through Sir William Robertson a message assuring him of their full confidence.

The combined attack with the French which had been arranged for the 18th of August was highly successful, and practically all the objectives were captured and many prisoners

taken. Douglas invited Foch to lunch on the following Sunday and together they planned future combined offensives. Douglas felt that Foch had been having rather a hard time of it from Joffre, who blamed him for the small advance he had made a day or two before. Foch explained that the men were really tired out, and had they been relieved before, there would have been no cause for Joffre's reprimand.

I had hoped that Douglas would have been able to come on leave whilst the children and I were still at Deal. In the beginning of September, therefore, I wrote a little pressingly, begging him to spare us a day or two, but in his reply Douglas said that, much as he would have loved to spend a few quiet days with us, he and I must be patient. He pointed out that it was his duty not to leave his troops at this juncture, and that he must do his utmost to help them to inflict a military defeat on the enemy's army in the field without delay. Reports showed the Germans to be in a serious condition. Shortage of food and a potato crop which had failed were bound to create unrest and possibly revolt amongst them in a few months' time. Douglas sent me extracts from German letters to let me see for myself that the enemy was undoubtedly feeling the constant pressure and in consequence their morale was deteriorating.

Douglas must have been very disappointed at not being able to take a day or two's leave, for he wrote me saying that he was looking forward to the quiet years in the future that he would spend with me far away from all the bustle and jealousies of the *Important*. He wrote of the quiet home that we would have together and how we would live our own lives with our children and find out for ourselves how Miss Goring, the nursery governess, was so successful in making them so extraordinarily good. He said that he thought love and affection would do more than anything else.

Early in September most of the fighting was taking place to the east of Guillemont. A footing had been obtained in

Leuze Wood and Douglas was quite satisfied with the way things had gone. The French, too, were getting on well. The weather had been very bad with heavy rain, but this time the wet ground had been more unfavourable for the enemy and had rendered more difficult the task of moving back his guns.

Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, arrived on the 6th. Douglas enjoyed talking with him very much, especially after dinner when the old man had enjoyed Douglas's special brandy. He always seemed happy in Douglas's presence and appeared to enjoy his visits to Douglas's headquarters immensely. His mind was so alert and he followed with great interest and understanding the complicated map that Douglas used to illustrate his points. Mr. Asquith visited the First and Second Armies and Douglas was most encouraged by his expressions of appreciation regarding the efficiency of all that he had seen. Mr. Lloyd George also arrived a day or two later accompanied by a crowd like a lot of Cook's tourists. Alan Fletcher, who was in charge of the catering, had a lot of worry trying to arrange matters to fit in with the complicated nature of the visits they wished to pay. Douglas sent me a very charming letter written by Mr. Asquith after he left, and drew an interesting comparison between him and Mr. Lloyd George. He mentioned, however, that he really got on with the latter very well but that he found him flighty and always liable to change his plans. Lloyd George's unpunctuality annoyed Douglas very much, and he always gave him the impression that he considered the methods adopted by the French much superior to those of the British. He seemed entirely under the influence of M. Albert Thomas, the French Minister of Munitions, who could persuade him to do anything he wanted, and could extract all sorts of promises from him. In fact it almost looked as if Mr. Lloyd George was prepared to promise him anything.

On the other hand Mr. Asquith had such a clear balanced mind. He was so business-like during his visits and could remember everyone to whom he had spoken during the day and what had been said. Lloyd George's visits always gave Douglas the impression of being joy-rides. He was followed round by groups of photographers and cinematograph operators.

On the 15th of September the tanks were used for the first time. They had come as a complete surprise to the enemy. The day had been fine for the attack, though there had been a slight ground fog which was a help for the tanks. Some of the tanks were extraordinarily successful and with their assistance the infantry were enabled to advance much more quickly. One tank in particular caused great havoc by firing from both sides into a German trench. A German officer who was taken prisoner at that point described the incident as "butchery". The tanks had certainly shown the value they could be to an attack and Douglas decided to apply for as many as possible to be sent out at once. He also suggested that experiments should be carried out with bigger ones with thicker, heavier plating. The gains made that day were greater than on any previous day. A break in the weather held up operations for about ten days owing to the difficulty in moving forward the guns on the soft ground, but as soon as it showed signs of improvement the offensive was resumed and Morval and Lesbœufs were captured though held by the best Prussian troops. Thiepval, Combles and Guendecourt villages were also taken along with a large number of prisoners. The Schwaben Redoubt, which had given so much trouble before, was also captured before the end of the month. Douglas was very happy about the way things were now going and he wrote me saying that he had a lot to be thankful for.

Douglas was very cut-up about the death of Philip Howell, who was killed on the 7th of October. Philip had

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been Douglas's chief staff officer in India in 1905 and we were both very fond of him. He had a great career before him and was a very keen soldier. Much like Douglas in character, he was steeped in duty to his country. As a young man he was perhaps somewhat too critical even as Douglas was. In fact I always compared him with what my husband must have been like before he developed the wonderful patience which was so marked during the years I knew him. General Howell was very young to hold the appointment that he had when he was killed.

On one occasion about this time, when General Foch lunched with him, Douglas learned that Lloyd George during his previous visit had met Foch and had questioned him closely regarding the efficiency of Douglas's command. Foch was very surprised that a British Cabinet Minister should stoop so low as to make disparaging remarks about his own army, and even ask his opinion of certain generals, whom he mentioned by name. The General was so shocked and embarrassed that he felt it his duty to tell Douglas about it. Such disloyalty proved Douglas to be right in his distrust of Mr. Lloyd George's dealings with the French and confirmed his opinion that L. G. was capable of promising anything without due consultation with the British Command. In one of his letters, Douglas thanked me for wishing to wring Lloyd George's neck for what he had done!

Thinking that Douglas would rather that I was with the children, I decided to leave my flat and look out for a house for us somewhere near Kingston. When I told him of my intention he was overjoyed and said he looked forward to being all together and having our children with us. I was rather afraid of the difficulty of getting new servants, but Douglas told me not to worry but just to go forward with a manly heart and all my troubles would be fully repaid by having the children to bring up myself in the way he and I would wish. He advised me to get a house big enough to

have a couple of spare rooms and to take a lease of it for five years.

Douglas came to London on the 22nd of November. He arrived about two o'clock, and after lunching with me went straight to the War Office to see Sir William Robertson, who told him of the "Peace Party" in the Cabinet and of how a memorandum advising of our coming to terms with the enemy had been drawn up by Lord Lansdowne. Douglas attended a War Cabinet meeting next day at Downing Street, after which we lunched together with Lord Derby. Douglas urged upon Mr. Lloyd George the necessity of concentrating on the western front, for he considered that on that front only could a decisive result be obtained. Douglas even went as far as suggesting that the Italian troops and guns should be brought to France and that the Russians should also be made to help the Allies. With these suggestions Mr. Lloyd George appeared to agree. Douglas also asked for as many tanks as possible to be sent out by the 1st of May, and at the same time pointed out that he was greatly handicapped by the shortage of railway wagons. He urged Sir William Robertson to see that all officers who had proved their worth be given promotion at once. He then discussed with General Macready the number of men that might be expected in France during the next twelve months, and seemed quite satisfied with the arrangements that had been made. Douglas also had an interview with the King, which lasted for nearly two hours. Lloyd George, who was now Secretary of State for War, called on Douglas and discussed the political situation. He considered that the position was very serious and very much deprecated Lansdowne's memorandum. After the discussion Douglas told me that Mr. Lloyd George had been very pleasant and had assured him that he was anxious to help the army in every possible way.

As will be seen, Douglas's time had been fully taken up

on official business, but when that was finished we went to see the house that I had taken at Kingston Hill. Douglas was quite delighted with it. We managed to play a round or two of golf at Coombe Hill and at Sunningdale and we both enjoyed our games. The weather was lovely. On our way back to London from Sunningdale we called on Lord Derby at Coworth Park. He, too, was very worried about the political situation.

Douglas returned to France on the 27th of November, but just before leaving London Lord Edmund Talbot came to see him on behalf of Mr. Bonar Law, who was anxious to know if he could help the army in any way big or small. Douglas told him of the need for more men and more powerfully engined aeroplanes to enable us to retain the supremacy of the air. Lord Edmund said that he was sure Mr. Bonar Law would put these points before the War Cabinet.

Douglas left Charing Cross about eleven o'clock, but they had to make a great detour when crossing the Channel as Admiral Bacon feared some mines. When he returned to his G.H.Q. at Montreuil he found that everything had gone on satisfactorily during his absence. He was grieved to learn from General Kiggell how some men of the Border Regiment, who had pushed forward on the 18th of November, had been cut off in the trenches east of Beaumont Hamel. Although the greatest efforts had been made by General Gough of the Fifth Army to relieve them, they had been obliged to surrender.

Immediately Douglas returned to France he had to attend more meetings at Chantilly. These conferences had started to take place earlier in the month owing to the government crises both in London and Paris. There were rumours that Joffre would have to go, and Douglas was sorry about this because he liked the old man and on the whole they had got on well together. It was suggested that Joffre be given a job as nominal head of the Allied Council of War and made a



Marshal of France. There was considerable doubt as to who would succeed him. From London also there were rumours. It looked very likely that Mr. Asquith would have to resign, and Douglas was sorry about this too because he had always found Asquith so capable and so anxious to carry out the requirements of the army.

On the 14th of December Douglas had again to come to London. General Davidson and Major Lucas met him and informed him that Mr. Lloyd George, who was now Prime Minister, was ill and not allowed to see anyone. General Davidson came with us to the flat and told Douglas that the Prime Minister was considering sending big guns to Italy. He also intended sending an expedition to Jerusalem and for this he wanted two divisions from France. Douglas interviewed many officials, and on everyone he urged the necessity for more men and pointed out that he required as many officers as possible. He was assured by the Adjutant-General that 150,000 men were under orders. Another point that bothered Douglas a great deal was the shortage of locomotives and shipping. He had a long discussion with Sir Albert Stanley, President of the Board of Trade, on this matter. In a conversation Douglas had with Sir William Robertson the latter told him how upset he was on account of the continual changes of plans of Mr. Lloyd George. It looked as if Lloyd George meant to make himself the *director-general* of the actions of all the Allies and to accomplish this he was anxious to supply guns and material to Italy and Russia so as to have some hold over these countries.

When Douglas saw the Prime Minister he was informed that it was essential that a successful action should be fought at once. He wanted Douglas to supply two divisions from France in order to achieve his purpose in Palestine. He also wanted Douglas to send 200 guns to Italy, but promised that they would be returned when finished with. Douglas explained his position on the western front, but Lloyd

George remarked that he did not consider a decisive victory there was possible. Douglas pointed out, however, the state of the enemy after the tremendous efforts we had made and the success we had achieved in the last six months' fighting, and that our position there would be much weakened by sending guns to Italy and ammunition to Russia. He also pointed out that after the heavy fighting that his troops had been through his divisions were being trained for the next offensive, which had in fact been prepared for the following year. Mr. Lloyd George, however, was determined to have his own way and withdraw the troops from France regardless of consequences.

There was a rumour going about that Germany might violate Switzerland's neutrality in order to attack France or Italy from that quarter, and General Joffre wanted to move troops to meet the situation. Douglas, however, thought that to do so would upset the present plans, and if the occasion arose support could be given to any ally that needed it by attacking strongly at some other point.

Before returning to France Douglas again went to see the King. His Majesty urged him to take a little leave now that he had the opportunity.

During Douglas's absence in London General Nivelle had been appointed to succeed Joffre. Douglas was anxious to meet him and asked him to dinner on the 19th. He thought General Nivelle was an intelligent man who seemed to know his work.

As soon as possible after his return Douglas resumed his visits to his troops and found all his men in the best of spirits. He wrote to me and asked if I thought the people at home fully realised what a splendid army they had, and discoursed on what could be done with such men when they were properly trained. He was always so proud of his men and thought so highly of them.

I sent out to Douglas at Christmas some rather fine

crackers amongst other seasonable fare, and evidently they had been much appreciated. He described the comical appearance of the various members of his staff in the paper caps, and Black, a young A.D.C., who was very popular with everyone, had evidently looked particularly dainty in a mob cap with white and green ribbons.

On the 28th Douglas received a charming letter from the King telling him that His Majesty had decided to make him a Field-Marshal. He told Douglas that he had earned such an honour by his conspicuous services. It was a very kind and happy thought that prompted the five army commanders to purchase the Field-Marshal's baton and present it to Douglas. He was very delighted and appreciated their generous action more than he could ever say. This was the first occasion in the whole history of the army that such an action had been taken.

Douglas decided to comply with the King's suggestion about leave and arrived on the 8th of January. We had been lent a delightful house—"Swinley Forest", Ascot—belonging to Hersey Lady Linlithgow. She, hearing from Sir Philip Sassoon that Douglas wanted a change from London and to have his children with him, had insisted that we should go there. We stayed the night at my flat and left in the morning for Ascot. Lady Linlithgow's servants, especially her very capable butler, welcomed us warmly and we found many kind and thoughtful preparations had been made for our happiness by our hostess. In the evening our two girls arrived from Wales and Douglas was very happy to see them. Unfortunately the weather was cold and some snow fell so that we were able to play little golf, but the children kept us amused with their funny little doings and we were kept quite busy playing games indoors or going for long walks in the ice and snow. They thoroughly enjoyed making large snow-men and the days passed only too quickly. Douglas was to have but a short respite, however,

for his quiet was disturbed on the 13th. We were all rudely awakened in the middle of the night by a loud rapping on the front door. The cause of the disturbance turned out to be a messenger from the War Office with a letter marked "Urgent". Douglas explained that it contained General Nivelle's scheme for future attacks. A telegram also arrived from Sir William Robertson saying that he would be expected to attend a conference on the 15th.

The morning of the 15th, therefore, found us leaving Ascot by motor so that Douglas could go and see the Prime Minister at Downing Street. Douglas's appointment with Mr. Lloyd George was at eleven o'clock and he was there to the minute. He came back to the flat where I was awaiting him and we lunched with his sister Henrietta. On our way he told me that the interview had not been satisfactory. Mr. Lloyd George had severely criticised the British army and insisted that the French army was far better and that the French generals more efficient and able to gain definite successes with much less loss of life. Douglas was very hurt that the Prime Minister belittled his troops in this way. He did not seem to realise at all what the British army had done. Douglas returned to Downing Street in the afternoon for the conference, at which General Nivelle was present. I gathered that little had been settled but that Mr. Lloyd George had shown in a very marked way his preference for the French methods of carrying on the war. Douglas and General Nivelle left before the conference broke up and it was continued in a private way without the attendance of any soldiers.

We returned to Ascot in time for dinner after a very cold drive through heavy snow. The following morning Douglas drove to London alone to attend another conference and did not get back till about six o'clock at night. Long discussions had taken place during the meeting and he was very worried about the ambitious scheme put forward by General Nivelle.

The Prime Minister made Douglas's task very difficult by complying with all that the French asked for. Douglas considered he had acted without safeguarding the interests of the British army. Next day the news from France was good. The Canadian troops had made a successful attack north of Vimy and had taken much ground. Meantime the weather had improved a little and we were able to play some golf during the next two days. I think probably that this relaxation helped Douglas quite a lot during these difficult days. We also saw a good deal of his brother Bee (Captain Haig), who often joined us on the golf course. On the 21st Douglas's brief holiday came to an end and he said good-bye to the children, who were returning to Wales the following day. We went to London and stayed in my flat because Douglas had to interview many people at the War Office before he returned to France. He left London the following day and Henrietta and I saw him off at Charing Cross.

On his return to Montreuil Douglas found it was bitterly cold: so cold, in fact, that when he lunched outside from his luncheon basket the water froze in the tumblers that he and his staff used. Douglas started immediately he got back to prepare plans for the future and had long discussions with his C.G.S. General Kiggell. He ascertained exactly the manpower and supply of ammunition with a view to the defences on each army front. He was very distressed to find that everywhere a great deficiency in quantities was shown. The railway situation, too, was again very serious and he conferred with General Nivelle in an attempt to try and improve their working. It was decided to appoint a French engineer to go round and discover where the real fault lay and report on the matter. Douglas also discussed his future plans for attack with General Nivelle and came to a very satisfactory understanding with the latter.

Meanwhile the proposed attack on Vimy Ridge by the Canadians was in preparation, but the question arose

whether the attack would not have to be postponed as great difficulties were being experienced in bringing up heavy guns owing to disorganisation on the railways. Douglas sent General Butler to see whether more labour could be procured. He also brought the matter up again with General Nivelle.

About the middle of February there was some trouble over certain reported interviews which appeared in the press. Douglas was supposed to have given these interviews to French journalists, but he wrote and told me that they were all rubbish and that they had never been given. When he enquired into the matter he found that the reports were mostly based on interviews he had granted to some distinguished Frenchmen who had been sent to him for help in propaganda work. Anything that had transpired at those informal meetings should not of course have gone into the papers. The press at home began commenting on the interviews, and I was very much worried about the matter. Certain people came to see me about it and told me that someone had obviously been at fault in allowing the interviews to pass the censor. They even mentioned the name of the chief intelligence officer, who, they said, should not remain on the staff as any mistake made by him might easily be attributed to Douglas himself. Douglas had evidently been told the same thing by others but refused to hear a word against him. I was asked to raise the question in my letters to Douglas, but I found this very difficult because all through our married life he never tolerated any interference by me in military matters although he confided everything to me. However, I became so anxious that I did make some remarks in a letter, but Douglas completely ignored what I had written and made no reference to it whatsoever. My anxiety grew because I knew that Douglas's greatest fault (if a fault) lay in the fact that he would never hear a word against anyone under his direct orders and trusted everybody until he

proved to his own satisfaction that they were unworthy of his confidence. He would rather take the blame himself than allow disparaging remarks to be made about a member of his staff. However, he himself referred to the reported interviews and realised that the interest taken in them at home was mainly due to certain individuals who wanted to seize the opportunity of turning opinion against him and possibly getting him removed from his command. The whole thing was exaggerated to such an extent and so much fuss was made of it that Douglas had to write officially to the War Office on the matter, which was eventually raised in the House of Commons. Douglas fully realised that there was the possibility of his being sent home, but all he said about the matter was that if someone better able to command the army could be obtained he would be perfectly happy to come to me in our new home and help me to bring up our children. He was absolutely independent in spirit and had a perfectly clear conscience regarding his actions. Whatever he did was, to the best of his judgment, in the interests of his country. He received a lot of kind letters from various high officials at home, including Lord Derby, who told him that he had the complete confidence of the army and of the nation and that there must be no question of his resigning.

At Douglas's next meeting with General Nivelle it was necessary to discuss certain alterations that required to be made to the future plans of campaign, because the date of the next attack had been fixed by the Government at home. They had taken full responsibility for making the arrangements though Douglas had stated that a later date would have suited him better. Now the Government were anxious to be relieved of their responsibility and had asked Douglas to confer with Nivelle so that the date of the attack could be changed to the one Douglas had originally suggested. His meeting with the French commander-in-chief had been

eminently satisfactory and they were thoroughly agreed on their future actions. It was obvious that no attack could be carried out until the working of the railways had been improved.

On the 26th of February Douglas left for Calais with Sir Eric Geddes, Director-General of Transport. Lloyd George, Sir William Robertson and others from London, as well as Monsieur Briand and General Nivelle, were also present at the conference. Although Douglas was anxious to have a short talk with Sir Eric Geddes and the Prime Minister before the actual conference, Lloyd George sent word that there was no time. The real reason for the Prime Minister's refusal was, however, soon discovered. At the conference after the railway problems had been discussed, Lloyd George without any warning invited Nivelle to give a complete account of all his dealings with Douglas. When the French general had finished his report, in which he spoke of the concord with which he and Douglas had worked together, the Prime Minister called on him to tell the meeting everything and to hold nothing back concerning the obstructions by Douglas to Nivelle's plans. Douglas, of course, was very taken aback and so was Nivelle, who protested that his conferences with Douglas had always been most friendly and that they agreed on all points with the exception of his final suggestion when Douglas had not quite seen eye to eye with him. When Douglas met Sir William Robertson after dinner that night he learned he had received a paper from the Prime Minister which contained French proposals to put the British army under the orders of a species of quarter-master-general, so that the commander-in-chief would only be responsible for discipline. When Douglas and Sir William Robertson, who were both furious at such a suggestion, went to see Mr. Lloyd George about the matter they were told that the War Cabinet had decided the previous week to place the British army under the command of General



Nivelle. Douglas pointed out that this was impossible and that the army would never submit to such a suggestion. Douglas and Sir William Robertson, for their part, agreed that they would rather be tried by court-martial than submit to remaining on under such conditions. The following day, at the request of Lloyd George, Douglas put his proposals on paper for a possible solution of the problem, and eventually an agreement was drawn up whereby General Nivelle was given authority to make all preparations before the battle and Douglas would carry out his instructions, with the proviso that if he considered that the British army would in any way be endangered by his carrying out General Nivelle's orders he would report the matter to the War Cabinet. During the battle the British army was to act on instructions issued by the French commander-in-chief, but Douglas was to have a free hand in choosing the disposition of his troops and using them according to his own judgment. Douglas thought it wise to write to the King and let him know exactly what had transpired at Calais. Douglas was not at all happy about the matter although he said very little about it. He always feared that by some underhand scheme his troops would be put entirely under the orders of the French. He very much appreciated the large number of extremely kind letters which he received, all of which expressed tremendous confidence in him, and the King sent Sir Clive Wigram to France specially to convey to Douglas His Majesty's expression of confidence.

The advance, meantime, continued satisfactorily. In fact the Germans began withdrawing almost before they were attacked. Douglas considered that the withdrawal of the enemy was the beginning of his preparations for a very big attack. It was obvious that his intentions were to fall back on the Hindenburg Line, which was a line of defence that had been prepared with intensely strong fortifications. If the enemy occupied this line of defence it would have the effect

of very considerably shortening his front, which would release a number of divisions and so enable him to launch a very powerful attack at a carefully selected point. Douglas thought that the intention of the Germans might be to force their way through near the coast and go for the Channel ports, which if accomplished might very easily pave the way for a German victory. If this was the intention of the enemy, then Douglas considered that to proceed with the ambitious schemes of General Nivelle would spell disaster for the British army, so he at once advised the War Cabinet of his views and pointed out the danger of placing his troops under Nivelle's orders before the battle actually commenced. There was also another danger due to the enemy's retreat to the Hindenburg Line. By so doing he would not only upset our plan of preparations for the proposed offensive but would cause much delay to the advancing troops and exhaust them by continual attacks. Douglas never imagined for a moment that this withdrawal was the retreat of a thoroughly beaten army but rather a clever strategic move in preparation of an offensive on a gigantic scale which might give victory to the enemy unless preparations were made to guard against it. These views Douglas also expressed to the French commander-in-chief.

Douglas had been instructed to select a liaison officer to be attached to General Nivelle's staff, and after much careful consideration decided on General Butler and advised the French headquarters of his choice. General Nivelle, however, before the advice of Douglas's selection reached him, wrote to Douglas and demanded that Sir Henry Wilson be appointed. The letter was written as if it had been an order of direction to a subordinate officer and Douglas resented its tone very much. He did not think that a Frenchman had any right whatsoever to write such a letter to the commander-in-chief of the British army, and so he sent a copy of it to the War Cabinet and asked if he was expected to

submit to insults of this kind. He felt it was pretty hard to have to contend with this sort of treatment from his own allies and the Government at the same time as he was fighting the Germans.

Not long after, Douglas received another letter of the same description from the French commander-in-chief *ordering* him to carry out some instructions. Douglas began to think that it was a sheer waste of time answering such communications and decided that if he just waited patiently the general would go too far for even the Government to remain silent on the subject. He therefore concentrated on making his plans for the new offensive. He resumed his visiting of the various headquarters and conveyed briefly to his army commanders what had transpired as the result of the conference at Calais.

When he saw Thiepval he was amazed at the strength of its defences, and told me that its final capture would always be a reminder to those who doubted the ability of the British troops to break through the enemy's line and be an example to them of what the army could really do.

In due course Douglas was advised by Sir William Robertson that his views regarding the situation caused by the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line had been considered by the War Cabinet and they desired to discuss the whole matter in London with him and the French generals. The French Government had also considered Douglas's report and had criticised it in such a way that certain people were afraid that Douglas might seriously think of handing in his resignation. He was asked by many on no account to resign, because if he did it was feared that Mr. Lloyd George might insist on a general election and be returned as dictator. Douglas replied that he had no intention of *resigning*. To do so would be to shirk his responsibilities, though it would be for him the easiest way out of an awkward situation.

Douglas received a third very annoying letter from General Nivelle. In this one the latter stated that he wanted to deal through the liaison officer direct with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in London. In other words, Douglas would not come into the picture at all but would be obliged to act on Nivelle's instructions or *commands* communicated to him from London through a third person.

On the 11th of March, therefore, Douglas arrived in London and took the first available opportunity of seeing Sir William Robertson. Everybody seemed very upset over what had occurred, and the King sent a message to Douglas by telephone asking him to come and see him. Lord Derby was very kind and sympathetic too. He considered that Douglas had been treated disgracefully, but asked him not to resign his command. Douglas told him that if the Government was not satisfied with him as commander-in-chief and wanted to get rid of him he was perfectly prepared to go as soon as a suitable person had been selected to succeed him. If he were going to be relieved of his command, however, he hoped there would not be any argument about it. The last thing he wanted was to be the central figure of a political upheaval.

Months afterwards, when the enquiry into Nivelle's operations was in progress, the president of the court stated that the letters written by Nivelle to Douglas and his staff were not sufficiently courteous, whereupon Nivelle wrote and asked Douglas to contradict the statement.

With the help of Sir William Robertson, Douglas prepared a statement setting out his views on the whole situation and sent it to the War Cabinet. He was quite prepared to accept Sir Henry Wilson for his liaison officer. Douglas's statement was fully discussed by the Cabinet and finally accepted by them, and Mr. Lloyd George then submitted it to General Nivelle, and after making one or two slight amendments he too gave his approval.

At a party held at the French Embassy which he attended in the company of General Lyautey, Douglas was received with the greatest courtesy and kindness by everyone. Douglas told General Lyautey that the British and French forces could never work in close harmony so long as young French officers considered the British army as a subordinate force and treated it as such. There had already been a certain amount of ill-feeling on this account, and if it were allowed to continue there would certainly be serious trouble.

The day after he had signified his approval of the points set out in Douglas's statement, General Nivelle went right back on what he had agreed to and wanted to make all sorts of alterations and changes. That day all those who had been attending the conferences lunched at Buckingham Palace with their Majesties, and Douglas was very much encouraged because after all the others had left the King told Douglas that he had his full confidence and that he could depend on His Majesty's support.

Sir Henry Wilson was a little nervous about his appointment as liaison officer and came to see Douglas at my flat about it. He told Douglas that he was so afraid he might be accused of joining in the intrigues against him; but Douglas pointed out to him that the most important factor in this case was that the liaison officer must be someone in whom the French could confidently impose their trust, and he was sure that Sir Henry would meet this requirement and do his best for both the British and the French.

The final agreement between Douglas and General Nivelle was brought to my flat late at night by a certain French officer. I was horrified at the discourteous and almost insolent manner in which he addressed my husband, and after he had left I asked Douglas who he was and told him that I did not like the look of the man at all. I warned Douglas to beware of him as I had seen hatred of my hus-

band written clearly all over the horrible man's face. My forebodings were not ill-founded, for within a fortnight of his return to France Douglas wrote telling me how he had also been warned by General Lyautey against him.

The agreement was ultimately signed, but before he put his signature to it Douglas insisted on a clause being added whereby it was clearly stated that the British army was definitely to take its orders from him and him alone. Douglas was afterwards asked by the Cabinet to prepare a statement bearing on any future offensives which were agreed upon by Nivelle and himself.

Immediately after his return to France Douglas heard of the resignation of General Lyautey, the French Minister of War. Douglas liked Lyautey. He found him trustworthy and not given to making promises that he could not fulfil. He was always very friendly towards Douglas and quite clearly realised how badly he had been treated. Douglas hoped that M. Thomas, the Minister of Munitions, would not succeed him as it was rumoured he might. M. Thomas was a socialist and obviously exerted a tremendous influence over Lloyd George. Indeed, Douglas always said that the latter's actions at the Calais conferences had been to a great degree prompted by M. Thomas, who had made difficulties for Douglas in other directions as well.

Lord Derby visited Douglas and in the course of conversation told him that he could see now the truth of Douglas's statement about the Somme battles and how the wearing out of the enemy was having a very weakening effect on his morale and fighting capabilities.

France was not without her political troubles at this time, and the Premier, M. Briand, resigned. M. Painlevé, who succeeded General Lyautey as Minister of War, met Douglas shortly after his appointment. Douglas found that he deplored the differences of opinion between the two countries and, like Douglas, realised that to bring the war to a success-

ful conclusion there must be a united front shown to the enemy. He expressed his willingness to work for this end and asked Douglas many questions regarding the recent friction between the two commanders-in-chief, about which there were many nasty rumours. Douglas was very careful to inform him that the personal dealings between himself and General Nivelle had been of a friendly nature and that he was quite satisfied in his own mind that the unfortunate outcome of the Calais conference was not the fault of General Nivelle.

In the beginning of April, as the day of the proposed attack on Vimy Ridge approached, Douglas visited that part of the front. He had moved his headquarters temporarily to Henchin so that he would be nearer to and in closer touch with the participating troops. He found that all preparations had been carefully carried out and officers and men were full of confidence.

Douglas loved the men under his command, and as he looked upon the wasted stretches of country where the many battles of the Somme had been fought he could not help thinking of the great number of fine lives that had been lost during the desperate fighting since the 1st of July 1916. He used to write to me often of the magnificent courage and determination of the men and their officers who made the British army. He never failed either to give full credit to the generals and their staffs for the skill they showed in directing the operations. Douglas seldom stopped thinking of all the brave men who either made the supreme sacrifice or were now maimed in the service of their country, and in April 1917 he expressed the hope that after the war a Prime Minister would be found who would realise what these men had achieved and would see to it that they received their full measure of justice.

The attack on Vimy Ridge on the 9th of April was eminently successful. The ridge was captured and about 10,000

prisoners were taken. Douglas was glad to be able to write and inform me that our losses had been slight compared with the importance of our achievement.

Douglas received congratulations on the success of this action from the King, General Nivelle and the War Cabinet, and when he sent me these letters of congratulations to file safely away beside his other documents of the kind, he told me he was glad to see that at last the Prime Minister and the Cabinet seemed to realise that the British army was a first-class fighting force and that the French were not alone in being able to achieve successes.

On the 16th of April the battle on the river Aisne, over which so much controversy had taken place since the Calais conference, was started by the French. Douglas still considered that General Nivelle's plans had been far too ambitious, but had made all the preparations he could to assist the French in every way to make the operation a success. The initial attacks passed off quite satisfactorily, but a very strong counter-attack made by the enemy held up the attacking troops to such an extent that Sir Henry Wilson, who was now at Compiègne with General Nivelle, told Douglas the following day that the attack had really been a complete failure and that the French had suffered extremely heavy losses. The German defences were much stronger than had been anticipated and it looked as if the attack on that part of the front should never have been attempted until more thorough preparations had been made.

Mr. Lloyd George had learned from his friend the French Minister of Munitions that if the French attack did not quickly prove itself a success the latter's advice would be to abandon the whole offensive and wait until the Americans were in a position to be of assistance in the following year. General Maurice was commissioned to find out what Douglas's opinion was. When Douglas was approached by him on the matter, he suggested that any questions



Lloyd George wanted answered should be put down in writing and he would then send his reply to Sir William Robertson, who could communicate the information to Lloyd George if he thought fit. He pointed out, however, the absurdity of the French contemplating the abandonment of their attack just at the very moment when it should be pressed home. At that time reports from prisoners showed that the enemy was short of food both with regard to the civilian population in Germany and amongst the troops in the fighting area. In Germany itself strikes had been common and Douglas thought that this was the very time when all the Allies should combine to make a special effort to take advantage of the enemy's weaknesses. If the Germans were allowed any respite they would without doubt increase the activity of their submarines in an attempt to improve the food conditions.

In France great disappointment was felt that General Nivelle's attacks had not been more successful. His ambitious plans had been expected to break through the enemy's lines and reach Laon in the second day's fighting. Instead of achieving a break-through, only a few of the objectives had been reached. When Captain Gemeau, the French liaison officer attached to Douglas's staff, discussed the situation, Douglas told him that as far as he could see the battle was progressing more or less as one would normally have expected it to do. Nivelle's ambition to break through the German lines could only have been fulfilled had the most careful preparations beforehand been made and everything been in readiness for pursuing the enemy as soon as penetration had been gained. In other words, it was useless to contemplate trying to break through the line of an enemy capable of counter-attacking strongly. Complete control of the situation must be acquired first, and that would take time.

When Douglas had prepared his written statement re-

garding the military situation he showed it to Captain Gemeau before sending it to Sir William Robertson. The former confirmed the accuracy of the account of the operations. Douglas learned from Sir Henry Wilson that the bad weather had held up General Nivelle's attack on the Aisne and that he had postponed any further activity, but that, in view of Douglas's recommendation that it was the entirely wrong moment to suspend operations, Lloyd George had gone to Paris and persuaded the French to get Nivelle to continue his attack for at least another ten days. Meanwhile the British had been attacking day by day and had advanced steadily. Douglas was thoroughly satisfied with the progress his troops had made.

At a meeting he had with General Nivelle, Douglas learned that the former considered that the talk and criticism about the failure of his attack had shaken the confidence of M. Poincaré, the French President, and that other generals were taking advantage of the situation and were trying to oust him from his position as commander-in-chief. Nivelle considered, however, that if he were superseded his successor would have exactly the same difficulties to contend with. Douglas told General Nivelle of his reasons for advising the continuance of the French attack and stated that he was prepared to help him to continue in any way he suggested. He pointed out that in his opinion it was an absolute necessity to clear the Belgian ports in order to curb the activities of the German submarines, and that this could be done best by launching an attack towards Liège. He considered also that an effort to capture Cambrai would be of great value, but that this could only be achieved if the French continued their attacks and so prevent the Germans reinforcing the Hindenburg Line in front of the town. General Nivelle promised that his offensive would continue as strongly as possible, and said he quite realised the danger which would be caused by stopping operations after

Douglas's troops were exhausted by the proposed attack on Cambrai.

Towards the end of April, Douglas went to Paris to see the French Minister of War, who seemed to consider that the result of the fighting on the Aisne had turned out to be a victory for the Germans. Douglas impressed upon him the necessity for continuing the offensive and was assured that the French Government realised the position clearly and that operations would be maintained without change of plans. Douglas also saw the French Prime Minister and made the same explanations to him and was again assured that everything would be done to carry out the arranged plans without change. Douglas thought that M. Ribot, the French Prime Minister, who was over eighty years of age, was old to deal with the political and military situation. He told Douglas how many of the French generals were jealous of Nivelle and thought that he should be replaced, but that he himself considered that it would be unwise to make any change at that time.

Douglas gave M. Ribot several maps which showed the disposition of the enemy's troops on the various sections of the front. He also gave M. Painlevé, the Minister of War, a map which showed what the British army had actually achieved in the recent fighting. Painlevé obviously did not have a great deal of confidence in Nivelle as a commander-in-chief and spoke to Douglas about the lack of adequate preparations having been made before the attack on the Aisne had started. Douglas agreed with him that the preparations had not been sufficiently thorough for the ambitious operations the French had had in view, but at the same time pointed out that it was impossible for a commander to issue definite orders and see them properly carried out unless he was sure of the support of the Ministry of War, and that if others lacked confidence in their commander-in-chief it was difficult for him to have confidence in himself.

M. Painlevé, however, seemed to consider himself as commander-in-chief, which must have made General Nivelle's work very difficult. Before Douglas left the Minister of War, the latter asked him to come and see him more often and offered to visit Douglas at his headquarters. Owing to bad feeling and much jealousy, a change was made in the French command before the end of April. Although Nivelle was left as nominal commander-in-chief, General Pétain was appointed adjutant-general and the former would require to carry out the latter's orders. This was only intended as a temporary measure prior to Nivelle being relieved of his command altogether. Pétain was actually appointed commander-in-chief about the middle of May. Douglas thought that this change was unfortunate because now that Nivelle had gone it was more than likely that the French attacks would be considerably reduced in intensity, and that being so, the capture of Cambrai would become a much more difficult proposition, besides creating an undesirable salient in the line. He therefore decided that in that area it would be best to form a strong defensive line between Loos and Laquicourt and then concentrate his activities on the preparations for the big offensive which had been planned at Ypres. Douglas felt that if France had been allowed to manage her own affairs in Paris without interference from London it might have been possible to avoid the change of the French command at that critical period of the fighting.

Douglas reported his conferences with the French statesmen in Paris to Sir William Robertson. He considered that his talks had helped to re-establish the confidence of the French Government, but the only thanks he received was a telegram from London asking him why he had been interviewed by the French Minister of War.

It was quite obvious by this time that, although the French had slightly improved their position, the contemplated break-through was now impossible and indeed

should never have been attempted. Douglas learned that the attack had developed into a purely infantry engagement owing to the ineffectiveness of the French artillery work and that twenty-two French divisions were attempting a break-through against a force of twenty-four German divisions. Naturally much criticism of Nivelle's plan was taking place in army circles.

In view of the virtual cessation of attacks by the French, it was decided that Mr. Lloyd George should go to Paris and Douglas was asked to go and meet him there. Douglas had a meeting with General Pétain before the conference, and explained his views on the situation. He suggested the plans he had in mind for the future and was pleased to find that Pétain was in complete agreement with him. Afterwards when Douglas met Nivelle, the latter was extraordinarily nice and, having admitted that his own plan had definitely failed to achieve its purpose, promised to help to the utmost of his power to make Douglas's future plans a success.

At the conference on the 4th of May Douglas was exceedingly grateful to Lloyd George for the high praise he gave to the British troops. He supported Douglas's views regarding the need for the French continuing their offensive and urged very strongly the necessity for vigorous action. Douglas thought he acted splendidly and wrote me saying that he had quite forgiven his previous misdeeds, because of the strong attitude he adopted on account of the needs of the British army. Two days later Lloyd George stayed with him at his headquarters and Douglas got on well with him and found him very different from what he had been on former occasions. I suggested that his change in manner was possibly due to his having heard such high praise of Douglas from His Majesty, but my husband rather doubted this and thought it was more likely that Lloyd George had changed on account of the successes of the British army

## THE MAN I KNEW

compared with the French. Certainly the King had a very high regard for Douglas because in the beginning of May I was invited to spend a few days at Windsor with Their Majesties, and the King then spoke to me of the great things Douglas was doing and of the heavy responsibilities that he had to shoulder.

During that visit to Windsor everyone was exceptionally kind to me and the war was not discussed, but Sir Clive Wigram was very anxious to see Douglas's diaries, which arrived for me each day, and he was much interested in the parts I showed to him.

On the 8th of May Sir Eric Geddes left Douglas to go to the Admiralty. Douglas was very sorry to lose him. He had been Director-General of Transport and had rendered very valuable service. Douglas had the greatest admiration for him and for what he had done and thought that he, too, was sorry that their associations had come to an end.

Meantime the changes that were made in the French command were so frequent that Douglas never knew for a period of almost fourteen days who was responsible for the French army. First one person would be appointed and then another, and Douglas thought that when Joffre returned from America there would be so much fuss made of him that he might quite likely be reappointed to the command of the army. The situation was so bad that, by the 16th of May, Douglas had not even received a reply to a letter written on the 5th. The result was that when he was asked by Pétain to meet him for a discussion in Amiens on the 18th, Douglas only consented to go if he were given an assurance that Pétain had really power to act in respect of the future plans which might be made for a combined offensive. At the conference, therefore, the first thing Douglas did was to ask Pétain if he was in a sufficiently authoritative position to give an answer to the letter he had

written thirteen days previously. Pétain informed Douglas that he had the necessary authority to deal with the matter and gave as the reason for the long delay his desire to answer the questions asked personally. He must, therefore, have known quite well when Douglas saw him in Paris that Nivelle would have to go and that he himself would succeed him.

Pétain gave Douglas to understand that he realised that the main effort was to be made by the British troops and he undertook to maintain vigorous attacks to prevent the Germans withdrawing troops to reinforce the divisions opposed to the British attack at Ypres.

All this time preparations were being made for the big offensive that it was planned to launch in the Ypres Salient. Douglas decided, however, that the final arrangements could not be made until the results of the operations at Messines Ridge were established. Meanwhile the French had relieved a number of divisions on Douglas's right and had also supplied six divisions to act under his orders near the coast. Douglas was determined that the attempt to capture Messines Ridge would not take place until our artillery had definitely the upper hand and had ranged on the enemy's batteries which would be used for defence. The enemy was now holding his front line very lightly, and it was discovered from orders issued by the Germans that the enemy no longer intended to fight to keep our troops from entering their front line but laid great stress on the importance of preventing our troops from occupying and defending it.

In the early morning of the 7th June, the mines at Messines were exploded. These were the biggest mines that had ever been used during the war, and under cover of a tremendous barrage our infantry advanced.

The whole attack went off absolutely satisfactorily and Douglas was very pleased with the results of the first day's achievements. The mines had all been exploded successfully

although some of them had been prepared more than a year before. Douglas wrote and told me that that day's operations were the most successful that he had ever undertaken. Prior to the attack Douglas had again made a particular point of going round all the corps and divisional headquarters, and was pleased to find the preparations had so carefully been carried out. Everyone was thoroughly confident and considered that the plans had been laid with attention given to the smallest detail. On this particular sector the troops had been on the defensive for so long that Douglas was at first afraid that they had not enough of the offensive spirit. As the preparations had progressed, however, he was gratified to observe the eagerness with which one and all entered whole-heartedly into the spirit of attack, and he gave great credit to all concerned for the thorough preparation that had been made. He told me that he himself believed that no attack had ever been more carefully prepared. The ridge at Wytshaete was captured, much to the surprise of the Germans, who had considered it impregnable.

Douglas was staying in his train for this offensive and using it as his headquarters. This was the first time that he had used the train as such and he found it very comfortable and convenient.

Things had apparently gone so well that Douglas wrote to me on the 8th of June saying that he would like to come and spend a week with me as soon as he managed to get matters a little more settled. I had not expected him to be able to come so soon and was just in the course of getting Eastcott, the house I had taken at Kingston Hill, ready. I therefore accelerated all the work so that Douglas would be able to come there.

Four days later he was informed that the War Cabinet would like to see him on the 18th of the month, so he decided to cross on the preceding day. Alan Fletcher and I met him at the station and went straight to Eastcott. Douglas was



very pleased with what I had done to the house and congratulated me warmly on the arrangements I had made. The 19th of June was Douglas's birthday and he received a great many congratulatory messages. He was rather pleased about it and surprised too, because as a rule the day passed almost unnoticed, Douglas himself even forgetting about it. In the forenoon Douglas attended a meeting of the War Cabinet, where the military situation was discussed. Douglas was shocked at the pessimism that was shown by most of the members present. Lloyd George seemed to consider that we should do nothing at all on the western front and expend our energies by sending support to Italy. Douglas pointed out that Germany was in such a bad state internally that every advantage should be taken of her weakened condition and that we should maintain the vigorous pressure which had been so successful in wearing out the enemy's troops during the past year. Douglas attended meetings in London every day that week, but on Sunday we spent a quiet day at Eastcott. Lord Derby came to see Douglas in the forenoon and said he thought Douglas should be suitably rewarded. He suggested that he should recommend him for a peerage, but Douglas informed him that he considered he had received sufficient honour when His Majesty had made him a Field-Marshal. He also pointed out that he and I were quite happy in our present position and that if he was raised to the peerage we would probably start living beyond our means and end in the bankruptcy court! The following two days Douglas attended more meetings in London, and he told me afterwards that the upshot of them all was that the operations in Flanders were to proceed in accordance with his plans. Lloyd George was much against this procedure, but the fact that all the military members favoured it, and also M. Thomas, caused him to give way although he was still anxious and obviously intended to send troops to Italy in spite of the fact that Douglas pointed out

that the man-power in France was still under strength and he would require every available division to carry through his plans to a successful conclusion.

Just before leaving London Douglas called at the Horse Guards to see General Sir John French, who greeted him warmly, and Douglas invited him to visit him in France. Douglas returned to France on the 27th of June. He found that things had gone quite satisfactorily in his absence, and when he visited the corps commanders he found them all thoroughly satisfied with their positions and sure of further success.

On July 3rd Douglas went to Cassel, where the King and Queen had arrived to stay for a day or two, and was pleasantly surprised when the King presented him with the insignia of a Knight of the Thistle. In handing the Order to Douglas, His Majesty pointed out that this was the finest decoration that was within his power to bestow. Douglas wrote and told me that it was by far and away the most cherished of all his decorations and that he would rather have it than any other. He also told me that the Duke of Buccleuch had declined to accept it so long as "the greatest living Scotsman was without the Order". The Duke of Buccleuch was always a great admirer of Douglas, and during my husband's life he tried very hard to get matters better adjusted in respect of the condition in which Bemersyde was handed over to Douglas. I was very grateful to the Duke after Douglas's death for all the help he gave me during a very difficult period, and I know that this help was just another illustration of his affection and regard for Douglas.

During Their Majesties' stay at Cassel the Queen and her party lunched at Douglas's headquarters. He told me that the Queen was very interested in all she saw and appeared to enjoy her visit. Apart from Their Majesties' visit Douglas was very busy with other visitors. General Pershing came to stay with him for two days and the French Minister of

War as well. He also went to Abbeville at His Majesty's request to meet the French President, who had been invited to lunch with the King.

Douglas had a long talk with M. Painlevé, the French Minister of War, during the latter's visit. He was glad to find that Painlevé entirely agreed with him on the question of vigorously attacking the enemy on the western front, and, like Douglas, considered that it would be a very grave mistake to withdraw any troops from France for service in any other theatre of war. The question of sending Flying Corps squadrons from France to England for home defence had also been discussed. They were in entire agreement that the obvious way to deal with the air raids on London was to retaliate direct on towns in the German back area. Any withdrawal of aeroplanes would seriously hamper the efforts of the French and British to gain the supremacy of the air which was so necessary to the success of all artillery and infantry operations. The French Minister of War seemed very anxious to help Douglas in every way that lay within his power.

Meanwhile I had been invited by the French authorities to go to Paris to visit the French hospitals there and Douglas had assured me that I would receive a great reception. He was rather amused that I should be regarded as an authority on hospital matters. I could see, however, that Douglas was not particularly anxious for me to go to Paris as he was afraid that it might create a precedent, and he did not want to set a bad example himself by encouraging women to visit the front, so I decided that it would be better if I did not go.

Douglas had a talk with M. Poincaré, the French President, after the luncheon at Abbeville with Their Majesties. He also agreed with Douglas that all our forces should be concentrated on the western front and was strongly opposed to any detachments being sent to Italy or elsewhere at the risk of the divisions in France remaining under strength.

## THE MAN I KNEW

On the 14th of July the King and Queen returned to England and Douglas went to Calais to see them off. They both seemed to have enjoyed their visit very much, and His Majesty gave Douglas a very charming message before he left, which Douglas sent on to me to preserve safely. The King thanked Douglas again for all he had done for him and told him that everything he had seen had given him pleasure and filled him with admiration and that there was nothing with which he could find fault.

Douglas was very surprised when he received a letter from Sir William Robertson which informed him that the Cabinet had not yet approved of the plans for the forthcoming operations, although preparations were now far advanced and it only remained to be determined what date would be best from all points of view to launch the attack. It was on the 21st of July that Douglas received this letter and he had every intention of having all his preparations complete before the end of the month. He replied to the communication by pointing out that the plans for this particular operation were agreed upon at the War Office as far back as November 1916. He also reminded Sir William Robertson of the fact that in the beginning of December 1916 the Cabinet had expressed their wish to both Douglas and General Joffre that this particular operation which was being prepared should be carried through during 1917. It was clearly obvious from the Cabinet's statement that they little realised the enormity of, and the time required for, the preparation necessary before an operation planned on such a large scale. However, Douglas received word later in the same day that the plans had been approved but that if the offensive did not succeed he was to arrange for sending troops to Italy. Douglas considered that at this critical time, irrespective of the result of any particular action, the withdrawal of troops from France might easily be enough to lose the war. He was convinced that if we slackened our attack in any way

the French would become discouraged and stop fighting altogether.

Amongst the many others who visited Douglas's headquarters was the Archbishop of York. In the course of conversation Douglas raised the question of a great Imperial Church. This was a subject to which my husband had given much thought. He spoke of it to the King after the war and made mention of its desirability, in many of his speeches when honours were being conferred upon him. He suggested that the Archbishops had, in the war, a golden opportunity of establishing a united Church to which all honest citizens of the Empire might belong.

Shortly before the attack was due to commence, Sir William Robertson came to see Douglas. He was in entire agreement that it would be folly to send troops away from France to Italy and other places. Douglas urged on him the necessity of his impressing this view on the Cabinet and to emphasise his conviction of the importance of the matter by handing in his resignation if Lloyd George persisted in acting in direct opposition to the advice of the General Staff. Douglas also asked him to ascertain if his proposed offensive had the full support of the Government.

It was just five days before the beginning of the most talked of part of the whole war, the operations in the region of Passchendaele, that my husband wrote to me about the writing of his life. He always coupled me with any such record and referred to it as *our* history. He insisted that one day *I* would write it because he was quite sure that he would be so tired of the whole war and the difficulties that were put in his way, that he would be quite unable to write sufficiently tolerantly of some of the members of the Government who had made his task so irksome.

The attack started on the 31st of July on a front of fifteen miles extending from Steenstraate village on the left to La Basse-Ville on the river Lys on the right. Very satisfactory

progress was made along the whole front during the first days' fighting. Indeed, the progress made was absolutely according to plan with the exception of one or two points where the attack was held up in the line of the third objectives. At these points very strong machine-gun posts in concrete emplacements had been encountered. The artillery had evidently not been able to destroy these emplacements and they were therefore the cause of the slight checks. Tanks, however, proved of considerable assistance in dealing with these obstructions and soon the enemy were dislodged from their strongholds. Douglas considered that the success of the first day of the battle was a very fine achievement. He was particularly pleased to note that the casualties amongst his troops compared extremely favourably with earlier actions, and this he put down to the splendid work of the artillery preparations. As the guns were moved forward into their new positions he impressed on his army and corps commanders the necessity of delaying further attacks until the enemy's artillery was completely dominated by our guns.

Douglas sent word to General Pétain that this was the proper moment for the French to deliver their attack. If the French attack were delayed it would allow the enemy to withdraw troops from the Verdun front to reinforce his weakened forces opposing the British advance. The enemy's casualties had been great, and as it was his obvious intention to take as many troops as possible to Russia in order to try and force a decisive action on the eastern front before the end of the year, Douglas pointed out that it was imperative that a tremendous effort must be made on the western front at that critical moment. Pétain agreed to make his attack on the date previously arranged and assured Douglas that there would be no question of postponement unless he was forced to do so on account of bad weather.

The weather started to break on the second day of the attack and grew steadily worse. Although the advance con-

tinued, the wet and stormy weather caused considerable delay in the progress. The ground became very heavy and the troops found great difficulty in advancing over it. The movement of guns and ammunition was, of course, also much hampered on this account. It soon became obvious to Douglas that the capture of the Broodseinde-Passchendaele ridge was of the greatest importance to the further success of the advance. The domination from this ridge had enabled the enemy to hold up the advance in the centre of the Fifth Army area very seriously. Douglas therefore went and saw General Gough and explained the situation to him, and suggested that the main objective should now be the capture of the ridge. He pointed out that until this was accomplished it would be quite impossible to advance in the centre. Gough thoroughly agreed. Douglas, however, realised the difficulty of the task especially in such wet weather, and advised him not to be in too great a hurry but to wait for some days after the weather started to improve so that the ground would get a chance to dry and enable the artillery to prepare the way more efficiently. He impressed on General Gough the absolute necessity of making certain that the artillery had acquired absolute supremacy over the enemy's guns before the infantry were allowed to attack.

On the 6th of August Sir William Robertson arrived again at Douglas's headquarters. This time, however, he was the bearer of a kind message from Mr. Lloyd George, who, in view of the successes by the troops in France, had evidently reconsidered his stated opinions about it being better to send troops to Italy than prepare for a strenuous offensive on the western front. He had, therefore, sent the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to convey his expression of complete confidence in Douglas. Whilst Douglas appreciated this encouraging support, he asked Sir William, in conveying his thanks to the Prime Minister, to point out to him the necessity of supporting him with men, aeroplanes

and guns and not merely with words. There did not seem to be much meaning behind his expression of confidence unless he stopped sending to Palestine and Italy the reinforcements which were so badly needed in France, and which, if they were received, might well convert the attack into a decisive blow. Douglas urged that if the offensive was going to meet with the success he hoped for, his establishments must be kept up to strength. At that time it was quite impossible to replace men and guns owing to the lack of drafts and supplies, and all his units were much below strength. Douglas considered that this state of affairs was entirely due to the fact that men and munitions were continually being sent to other theatres of war, and he asked Sir William Robertson to use all his influence to have this wasteful dispersion stopped at once and make all possible efforts to concentrate every available man and gun in France.

Wet weather at the end of August considerably held up operations, but Douglas hoped that this would not seriously affect the ultimate success of the offensive for which he was making preparations. The probability of the weather becoming fine towards the middle of September after the long spell of rain seemed likely, and this would enable the offensive to be continued for a longer period than was originally intended and Douglas considered that this would be greatly in his favour. Unfortunately the delay made it impossible for Douglas to come on leave as soon as he had hoped.

Early in September, however, Douglas was informed that General Foch proposed going to London to persuade the War Cabinet to allow him to send a hundred heavy guns to Italy at once. These guns he intended to withdraw from the French First Army. As this withdrawal of guns from the western front would seriously affect Douglas's plans, he decided to go to London immediately.

The enemy meanwhile were preparing a big gas attack



in Champagne and General Pétain asked General Anthoine to send some of his guns by rail to deal with the matter. General Anthoine, however, consulted Douglas before taking action, and the latter, being anxious to help Pétain in return for the valuable support he had given during the recent fighting, agreed that the guns should be sent provided they were returned in good time for the next attack. Pétain was anxious to destroy the enemy's arrangements for the proposed gas attack before they were completed.

Before going to London Douglas consulted General Anthoine, who commanded the French divisions placed under Douglas's orders, who told him that his plans would also be seriously upset if any guns were withdrawn from him for Italy and that he had none that could be spared.

As soon as Douglas arrived in London, where I met him at the station, he went straight to Sir William Robertson, who informed him that the Cabinet would meet at 9 P.M. to discuss the question of transferring the guns from France to Italy. Douglas left a written statement of his views on the subject and we then went on to Kingston Hill.

In the morning Douglas met Foch, who was very strong in his demands for the hundred guns to be sent to Italy, although Douglas pointed out how such an action would handicap him on the western front. In a conversation Douglas had, later in the day, with Lloyd George, the latter suggested that it would be good policy if Douglas could possibly arrange for the guns to go. The French were evidently trying to curry favour with the Italians, and if we prevented the guns being sent whilst the French wanted them to go it would react adversely against Britain. Douglas consented to look into the whole matter again and promised that if it were at all possible to release even fifty guns without endangering his position, he would do so. Lloyd George was very grateful to Douglas for his help to the Government in a difficult situation.

Douglas arrived in London on the night of the 3rd September and left about one o'clock on the 6th. Most of his time was taken up on official business but we did manage to have one game of golf at Coombe Hill on the day before he returned to France.

Immediately Douglas reached his headquarters he went very carefully into the question of how he could best release the required guns and ultimately came to the conclusion that it could be done by weakening his position at Lens, where the Canadians were still advancing steadily, and provided that General Pétain would promise to replace the withdrawn guns in plenty of time for the offensive as planned. At the meeting he attended the following day, at which Foch and Pétain were present, he put forward these views, at the same time pointing out that by this arrangement he might be forced to abandon his attack at Lens. The result of the conference was quite satisfactory and everybody seemed pleased about the amicable way it had been arranged. Pétain, who had reorganised his artillery, was able to promise to replace the withdrawn guns by the time specified by Douglas. It was a great satisfaction to Douglas that the matter had been remitted by the War Cabinet to be settled between Pétain and himself. He thought that Foch should have consulted him before he approached the British Cabinet. Douglas received a very kind telegram from the Prime Minister congratulating him on the way he had carried the matter through.

During the early part of September Douglas was visited by many of the politicians, including Sir F. E. Smith, Mr. Winston Churchill, Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Asquith. Douglas found them all, with the exception of Winston Churchill, much in favour of concentration on the Western Front. The latter, like Lloyd George, seemed to have some doubts on the matter. They were all very much interested, however, in what they saw of the preparations for the forth-

coming attack and Mr. Asquith was particularly impressed with the tremendous spirit of confidence that was obvious throughout the entire army, both officers and men. Douglas was again very much struck by Mr. Asquith's power of understanding and by his all-round knowledge. He told me that he considered the old man by far and away the cleverest of all the politicians that came to visit him and that he was always pleased to see him.

Douglas learned that there was a scheme afoot to form an Allied General Staff in Paris, so that the French would be able to control all the operations on the western front in spite of the fact that the French army was no longer able to maintain an active offensive of any size. Douglas was quite sure that such an arrangement would be quite unworkable and would almost certainly spell disaster for the British army in France. Both he and Sir William Robertson were strongly opposed to the scheme.

For some weeks prior to the attack Douglas, as was his custom, visited all the corps and divisional headquarters and satisfied himself that every detail had been arranged and all preparations carefully carried out. He felt thoroughly satisfied with the training of the troops and was again very pleased to find such a splendid feeling of confidence of success wherever he went.

The attack began on the 20th of September in the early morning and extended from Langemarcke on the left to Hollebeke on the right, a distance of about eight miles. Although the weather was far from favourable, the attack met with complete success at all points. Practically all the objectives were reached and at some places even passed. The whole of the high ground east and south-east of Ypres, including the ridge by the side of the Menin Road, which had held up the previous advance, was captured and our troops penetrated to a depth of about a mile. Further progress was made on the following day, and many counter-

attacks which were launched by the enemy were successfully repulsed with severe losses to the Germans. Douglas was particularly pleased to learn that the casualties amongst his troops had been so small.

By the end of the month the weather had cleared and this made a big difference to the advance. The work of moving forward the guns was made much easier and could be carried out much more quickly. The advance continued and Douglas saw his army commanders and impressed on them the importance for thorough preparation before each succeeding attack so that full advantage could be taken of the successes gained.

Douglas was much upset by the fact that the French had not started their attack by the end of September. He had repeatedly asked Colonel de Bellaigne, the head of the French Mission, to impress on General Pétain the necessity of his attacking vigorously, and when the former informed him on the second last day of September that the French could not attack before the middle of October Douglas reminded him that Pétain had promised that his attack would commence in the middle of September. Obviously this delay was very serious to Douglas's plans, as any attack made by the French after the main attack, planned by Douglas for the 10th of October, would be useless. The main object of the French attacking at all was to prevent the enemy moving troops to stop the British advance farther north.

It had been definitely agreed by the War Cabinet that Douglas would be present at all conferences with the French relating to operations in France. He was amazed, therefore, to be informed on the 3rd of October that it had been decided at a conference held at Boulogne about a week before, at which Douglas was not present, that the British troops should take over more line from the French, and that it was left to Pétain and himself to make the necessary

arrangements. Nothing had been said of this to Douglas by either Sir William Robertson or Lloyd George, although he had had an interview with them both at his headquarters the day after the conference at Boulogne. The latter had mentioned casually that Pétain was desirous that some of the line held by the French should be taken over by the British but Sir William Robertson had firmly asserted that he thought it was high time that the British took the lead and made their own decisions.

On the 4th of October Douglas wrote to me that the attack that day had succeeded even more than he had dared hope. It appeared that as the troops were about to advance the enemy had also launched a big counter-attack and had been caught in the barrage just as the British began to advance. The enemy's losses were therefore very severe whilst the objectives were gained with comparatively few casualties.

A firm footing was established on the southern half of Passchendaele Ridge and a point was reached within a mile and a half of Passchendaele village to the north. All the heights were captured with the exception of the Keiberg Spur and the isolated height of Moorslede. The village of Broodseinde was also taken. Everyone was thoroughly satisfied with the results of the attack, for now that practically all the ridges were captured further advance seemed comparatively easy. In consultation with his army commanders Douglas decided that the next attack should take place two days later.

The advance continued steadily. Each attack as it was made achieved the objectives decided upon, but the weather again broke and the attack made on the 12th did not get as far as was anticipated. The heavy ground kept the infantry back very much and the guns could not be brought up quickly enough in sufficient numbers to subdue the enemy's fire completely. The Germans were now using many more

machine-guns, which also slowed down the progress of the troops. In some places the mud was so bad that the light railways used for bringing up ammunition and supplies had completely disappeared and even some of the engines were sunk in the mud up to the boiler. During the drier periods Douglas had observed that nothing seemed capable of stopping the advance of the infantry and so he advised his army commanders not to make any further attacks unless the weather showed signs of keeping fine.

Douglas was very disturbed when he heard from Sir William Robertson that Lloyd George was calling in outside generals to advise him on the future policy to be prescribed for operations on the western front. Douglas considered that as the Imperial General Staff had been organised to advise the Cabinet, it was not right that such men as Sir John French and Sir Henry Wilson should be called in. Sir William Robertson felt so strongly about the matter that he asked Douglas if he should not resign, but Douglas advised him to wait and in the meantime put in a protest in writing, and told him that he would do the same.

Douglas received a very kind telegram from Lord Derby, Secretary of State for War, saying that it was not necessary for Douglas to come to London and that he must not allow these matters to add to the anxieties and responsibilities with which he was already burdened.

A day or two later Douglas received a telegram from the Prime Minister conveying the congratulations of the Cabinet on the successes that had been achieved by Douglas's skill and leadership in face of the difficulties due to the most unfavourable weather conditions and renewing his own personal assurance of confidence in Douglas's leadership.

This was the first time since the beginning of the war that Douglas had received any congratulatory message from the Cabinet, and after what had recently transpired he could

not help wondering why the Prime Minister had suddenly sent him this message.

On the 17th of October the Portuguese President, accompanied by a number of his ministers, lunched with Douglas at his headquarters. After lunch the latter was presented with the most exalted of all Portuguese orders. Indeed this was the first time that the order had been given to anyone outside Portugal, and Douglas told me that before it could be given to him special legislation had to be passed.

By the 18th there was still no signs of the French starting their long-promised attack on the Aisne and on that date General Pétain came to see Douglas. He was profuse in his apologies for the delay but said that the fault lay with the two generals concerned, who would not move in the matter. He told Douglas that Foch and the French Premier had had a meeting with Lloyd George and General Wilson and it had been recommended that, owing to the state of the French army, the British should take over some of their line, and that he had been ordered by the French Government to arrange the matter with Douglas. He stressed the fact that if Germany managed to strike a decisive blow against Russia, which looked probable, forty-five divisions would be brought to the western front and he had not enough troops to hold the whole of his line against an attack of any size. Douglas did not agree with Pétain's arguments as to why the British should relieve six of the French divisions, but he decided that in view of the fact that the British Cabinet seemed anxious that it should be done, he would do his best to have it accomplished. He pointed out, however, that if all six divisions were to be relieved the British Government would require to send the necessary men from home to enable him to maintain a sufficient force to carry on the offensive, for he could only transfer four divisions for the purpose meantime. He there-

fore promised that he would relieve at least four divisions of the French Sixth Army at the end of November.

On the 27th of October Douglas received a telegram informing him that it was decided that two divisions be sent from the western front to Italy. He was very angry that this decision had been arrived at without even ascertaining what effect the withdrawal of two divisions would have on the operations in which he was engaged. If there was a chance of Russia going right out of the war and a large number of German divisions transferred to France, he considered that the best possible preparation for such an emergency was to continue as vigorous an offensive as possible on a very wide front and in that way wear out and weaken the enemy's troops to as great a degree as could be achieved. He could not see how this was to be accomplished, however, if the Government insisted on ordering him to relieve six French divisions one moment and the next to send another two divisions to Italy. Douglas had repeatedly stated that he required every available man on the western front and strongly urged that his units should be maintained at their full establishment.

By the end of October the advance had progressed so satisfactorily in spite of the terrible state of the ground that the village of Passchendaele had been reached. The Canadians had advanced to the outskirts of the village on the west whilst the success of the operations to the north and south had enabled the troops to get round the village on both sides. Meantime there was a suggestion that a further four divisions might be required for Italy, and Douglas made up his mind definitely that if these had to go it would be utterly impossible for him to take over any of the line held by the French. A conference had been called in London but Douglas was much too occupied with the operations in which his troops were engaged to attend himself, so he sent his Chief of Staff with instructions to impress



upon the Cabinet the folly of sending more troops to Italy.

General Pétain called on Douglas on his way to London. It appears that he had been asked to attend the conference but had been given no information regarding it or reason why he should be present. He was very anxious that Douglas should accompany him to London because he felt that they two should be united in their dealings with both French and British politicians. On his return to France he told Douglas that he had refused to meet the War Cabinet except in Douglas's presence, but that he had had a meeting with Lloyd George at which he had suggested that Douglas should command all the troops in the area from the sea to the Aisne and that he would be in command of all the rest of the forces on the Western Front including those operating in Italy.

After the conference in London, Douglas met Lloyd George in Paris while the latter was on his way to Italy. Douglas was informed that the French and British Governments intended to form an Inter-Allied Supreme War Council and that it would consist of the Prime Minister and another member of the government and one general. The British and French generals were to be Sir Henry Wilson and Foch respectively. Lloyd George complained that hitherto his suggestions regarding operations in France had always been overruled by the General Staff, but Douglas pointed out that he had never acted on their advice inasmuch as that he had dispersed the forces instead of concentrating all the available man power and guns on the western front.

It was in November 1917 that Douglas wrote to me saying that he thought Lloyd George would make an appeal to the public, posing as the saviour of his country and saying that if only his suggestions had been followed instead of the bad advice of the General Staff then all would have been well!

General Pershing was in Paris at that time, and in the course of conversation with him Douglas discovered that they were in complete agreement regarding the military situation.

In the attack made by the Canadians on the 6th of November, Passchendaele was captured. Douglas was delighted that, although the enemy's positions had been strongly fortified, all the objectives had been taken in that day's attack with the surprisingly small casualty list of less than 700 men. Douglas learned afterwards, from prisoners taken, that the enemy had issued instructions that Passchendaele was to be held at all costs and that the place had been so fortified that the Germans considered it impregnable.

Just after this successful operation, when victory looked almost at hand, Douglas was ordered to send another two divisions of infantry to Italy, accompanied by a number of batteries of artillery and two squadrons of aeroplanes. General Plumer and his staff were also instructed to go to Italy to take command of the British forces there.

This naturally upset Douglas's plans very considerably, as General Plumer was commanding the Second Army at the time and actively engaged in the offensive which was then in operation. Douglas could not understand how he was expected to carry on a successful campaign if his army commanders and their staffs were going to be transferred to other theatres of war right in the middle of a battle. He, however, had no alternative but to carry out the order and make the best of it.

A few days later he received word from London to send still a further four divisions with heavy artillery to Italy and that in all probability it would be necessary for him to arrange for their relief during the winter. This completely finished any further idea of trying to carry on an offensive with any degree of success so Douglas issued instructions that no more attacks were to be attempted meantime. What

he feared most was that when the Germans realised how the British attacking troops had been depleted by withdrawals for Italy they would concentrate their forces farther south and launch a fierce attack against the French. The result of such action, Douglas felt sure, would without doubt put an end to sending troops to Italy.

Small local attacks as well as artillery bombardments were continued on the Passchendaele front in order to mislead the enemy, and meantime Douglas prepared as best he could with his depleted divisions for the next part of the offensive farther south. He was very gratified to learn that Pétain was prepared to place five divisions of infantry and three of cavalry at his disposal, and at the same time did not seem so anxious for the French Sixth Army to be relieved. Douglas had previously explained that he would only be able to release two divisions for taking over part of the French line owing to shortage of troops. The help offered by General Pétain was very encouraging and Douglas continued his preparations with much greater confidence.

It will be remembered by many how Lloyd George made a speech in Paris, about this time, in which he had indicated that the Government in London had doubts about the Allies coming out of the struggle victorious. Much public feeling at home was raised against his expressing such views and I was very worried about the whole matter for Douglas's sake. I knew such statements as he made would have a much more encouraging effect on the enemy than on our own Allies and I wrote to Douglas about it at considerable length. He told me not to worry myself unduly. He himself intended to completely ignore Lloyd George's attacks on his leadership and he was sure that the people at home would not be influenced by such incorrect statements. He assured me that all the War Cabinet, with the exception of the Prime Minister, were confident of our ultimate success and

## THE MAN I KNEW

were fully satisfied with the achievements that had been made during the previous twelve months. He also told me that, no matter what happened, he intended to continue his work on the western front to the very best of his ability, without regard to his personal feelings in the matter. What encouraged him most was the knowledge that the army continued to express its complete confidence in him as their leader, and this, coupled with the fact that he knew that I whole-heartedly agreed with his intentions, helped him to carry on with a perfectly easy conscience, under conditions made more difficult by the Prime Minister's attacks on the army. He always said that if the Cabinet did not approve of the way he commanded the army, they would remove him if they could find anyone whom they thought would do better. He was quite prepared to go when he was told, but until then, he considered that his duty lay with his men on the battlefield. The anxiety about the weather seemed to trouble Douglas really more than what politicians said about him!

The attack was launched to the south of Cambrai on the morning of the 20th of November. This was actually against what was known as the Hindenburg Line, and was on a front of about seven miles. The infantry attack was supported with about four hundred tanks which cut lanes through the wire. The system of trenches was very heavily protected with wire and the defences were particularly strong. Nevertheless so great was the surprise of this attack, which had been kept very secret, that the troops occupied the third line of defence with comparative ease and the casualties were particularly light. All the objectives were gained in spite of a few temporary checks. Douglas asked that, in view of the success of the operation, the two divisions which were in readiness to go to Italy might be used, and this request was granted provided he could replace them as soon as possible.

The attacks on the Cambrai front continued but the enemy brought up large reserves and the battle became of a ding-dong nature. Many counter-attacks were launched but most of them were repulsed at once, although some took a day or two to recapture the ground that had been lost. The principal stumbling-block was, however, at Bourslon. This was a very strongly defended point and repeated attacks failed to drive the enemy out. Unfortunately it dominated the position and until it was captured the advance elsewhere was necessarily held up. The line everywhere except at this point was thinly held, but the shortage of troops at Douglas's disposal was a great handicap. He wrote and told me that another two divisions would just have made all the difference. He had hoped that a complete break-through might be achieved and that he would be able to employ the cavalry to exploit his success to its full advantage. The break-through, however, just failed to be accomplished.

The Germans launched a very strong attack on the last day of November in order to drive our troops from their position in Bourslon Wood. The Third Army, under General Byng, came in for the severest part of this attack and Douglas was very troubled as to the result. He had sent every available man to the assistance of the hard-pressed troops, but these reserves were small owing to the withdrawal of troops to Italy. Besides, the fighting troops were very tired owing to the shortage of troops for proper reliefs. Nevertheless tremendous losses were inflicted on the enemy, and by the 4th of December Douglas became less anxious about the situation. He found his corps commanders confident that they could now hold back the German attacks, which, though causing many casualties, had failed to capture our position in Bourslon Wood. The enemy, however, appeared to be determined to drive us out regardless of cost to himself, and so it was decided to evacuate the position

rather than sacrifice more lives by attempting to hold it against such overwhelming odds. The withdrawal was accomplished without the knowledge of the enemy, and two days later Douglas conferred with his army commanders as to the best method and position for organising their defences. Now that Russia was out of the war it was necessary to be prepared for the attack that the Germans might launch with the thirty or more divisions that would no doubt sooner or later arrive on the western front from Russia.

This conference took place at Doullens and it was the first held there for six months. The previous one had been just prior to the attack at Messines and at that time Douglas had made his plans assuming that Russia, Italy and France would all help him, instead of which the British troops had not only done all the fighting alone but had given assistance to each of those Allies. Douglas paid great tribute to his army commanders and told them that they might well feel proud of themselves for what had been achieved under such adverse circumstances.

Although it was impossible to tell at that time if the enemy intended to renew his attacks at Cambrai, Douglas realised that thorough preparations would have to be made to meet an extensive offensive by the Germans in the spring.

Douglas felt the need of a short respite, but it was so uncertain what the Germans intended to do that he thought it better for him to remain in France until things became more settled. In the middle of December he had changed his chief intelligence officer and General Lawrence had taken over the duties.

The French were again pressing him to take over more of their line but he had not the troops to comply with their request. The constant fighting of the past twelve months had tired out his men, who were really not fit to take over

and hold any more of the front. However, an arrangement was arrived at between Douglas and General Pétain whereby the former agreed to relieve two French divisions early in January and more by the end of the month according to how his troops were placed by that time.

By the 28th of December the situation on the western front had quietened down and it was not thought that the Germans intended any immediate attack, so Douglas arranged to come on leave on the 29th, and I met him at Victoria early in the afternoon of that day. We went straight home to Kingston Hill.

Douglas was at home till the 12th of January and most of the time we spent together. The children, of course, were at Eastcott at this time and we took them to the pantomime at Drury Lane. I think Douglas enjoyed the performance as much as the children. Practically all his holiday it was hard frost and very cold so that he did not get very much golf. One day he was summoned to Buckingham Palace, where the King presented him with his Field-Marshal's baton. He also attended one or two meetings of the War Cabinet and a few people came to Eastcott to discuss various matters of importance. He attended luncheon at 10 Downing Street, where the probable duration of the war was discussed. Douglas told me that Lord Derby thought that it would be all over by next New Year but that Lloyd George did not think so. Douglas gave as his opinion that the war would be over by the autumn because, judging from the internal state of Germany, she could continue no longer. There were only a million men as reserves for the whole of the coming year's fighting and if these were all used up there would be none left to develop the country afterwards even if Germany won. Douglas did not think that this risk would be taken. It was much more likely that she would sue for peace before that stage was reached. They might, of course, try and break through our defences by sheer pressure of numbers,

but such action would be taken as a last possible chance of victory.

For some time after he returned to France on the 12th of January, Douglas found things had become comparatively quiet. Although a certain amount of activity was observed on the part of the Germans, it was still quite uncertain where they proposed to make their attack. The work of strengthening the defences all along the front was therefore continued and Douglas spent much time advising and seeing that the work was thoroughly carried out, especially at Ypres and other points where our defence line seemed weak. At the former place difficulty was encountered in the work on account of the fact that the line lay in the section that had been subjected to terrific bombardment and the ground was in a very churned-up state. The question of labour was also rather acute and difficult to arrange. Douglas suggested that all the field batteries should be taken farther back and the longer-ranged guns used for barrage work. This was so that in the event of the enemy attacking and driving our troops back, more time would be available for the moving back of the guns.

Towards the end of the month a conference was held at Compiègne at which Douglas was present. Generals Pétain, Foch and Pershing and Sir William Robertson were also there. The conference was called by the latter, but as he had not stated why, Pétain, who presided, started off by asking him the reason for the meeting. It appeared that the British Government wanted to know what arrangements were being made for defence. After the conference Douglas told Sir William Robertson that no matter what the Supreme War Council said to the contrary it was quite impossible for him to take over the French line as suggested unless he had more troops to employ. He was being asked to extend his front by about fourteen miles and he had not sufficient divisions to operate with safety on such a large frontage.



The Chief of the Imperial General Staff thoroughly agreed with Douglas's views and said he would support them to the best of his ability.

In spite of this shortage of men and the obvious results that would accrue if the enemy launched a really heavy offensive with the help of the thirty-odd divisions from Russia, the Supreme War Council at Versailles not only suggested that a large combined offensive should be staged on the western front, but strongly advised sending an expedition to Palestine to annihilate the Turks.

At a long-drawn-out meeting of the Supreme War Council, at which all the commanders-in-chief were present, it was ultimately decided to adopt a defensive attitude on the western front meantime, but Lloyd George still persisted in sending his expedition to Palestine. That too, however, was postponed for two months. It was also decided to form an inter-allied general reserve in France.

At that conference Douglas was very much impressed by the soundness of the policy advocated by M. Clemenceau, who presided at the meetings. Douglas was very glad because he knew Clemenceau would not tolerate any unsound suggestions being carried out.

On the 9th of February 1918 Douglas came to London at the request of the Prime Minister. Lord Derby and I met him at the station when he arrived, and Douglas went straight to 10 Downing Street with Lord Derby to meet Mr. Lloyd George. Douglas was far from satisfied with the proposed method of controlling the inter-allied general reserve. He pointed out to Lloyd George that by the proposed method practically unlimited power was vested in the military members of the Supreme War Council. He suggested that as he could take orders only from the Army Council it would be better if the British military representative of the Supreme War Council could consult personally with

General Foch, who would have the whole say as to how the general reserve was to be used, and pass on his advice to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who would then advise the Cabinet on the situation. Instructions could then be issued to Douglas through the usual channels.

Douglas was only at home for two days and went back to France on the 11th. He had, however, to return to London five days later on account of an unfortunate situation that had arisen. It was proposed to transfer Sir William Robertson to be military representative at Versailles and make Sir Henry Wilson Chief of the Imperial General Staff acting directly under the Secretary of State for War, as was the case in Lord Kitchener's time. Sir William Robertson, however, thought that he should fill both the posts of military representative at Versailles and Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and although he had been offered his choice of either of the posts he would accept neither. Sir Henry Wilson had, therefore, been appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

The reason Douglas had insisted on coming to London on this occasion was on account of his having heard that the Prime Minister intended to make a statement saying that Douglas approved of the system of working. He had, however, never been consulted and had stated definitely that in his opinion the whole organisation, including the constitution of the Supreme War Council, was bad. It meant that he received instructions from two sources. His suggestion of the Cabinet being advised by the Army Council on the recommendations received from Versailles and passing their instructions on to him by way of the C.I.G.S. had, however, regularised things to a certain extent, and the Cabinet having decided that matters should be thus administered, Douglas had said he would do his utmost to make the system work. He did not, however, approve of it and having again made his views clear, he returned to his

headquarters on the western front to continue his defensive preparations. Before going back, however, he had been instructed to confer with Sir Henry Wilson and determine who should go to Versailles. Douglas, considering that Sir Henry Rawlinson was the best man, sent to France for him and asked him if he would accept the post. General Rawlinson told Douglas that he would do whatever the latter thought was the best for the army and the cause in which they were all engaged.

Douglas spent the next month visiting all the various commanders and inspecting their preparations for resisting the expected attack by the enemy. There was still no definite sign of it but raids were frequently made and information from prisoners taken was conflicting. He seemed thoroughly satisfied with the work that had been accomplished and felt very proud of the confidence shown by all ranks.

An inter-allied conference had been summoned in London for the 14th of March and Douglas decided to cross on the 12th. He attended a preliminary meeting at the War Office on the following day and the conference meetings occupied most of the 14th and 15th.

My son was born on the night of the 15th March. Few babies can have been so welcomed. The newspapers acclaimed him and everyone seemed to take a personal pleasure in his arrival. Douglas returned to France the day after, but before he left he received from the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace Their Majesties' very warm congratulations.

Douglas was very sad at not being able to stay at Eastcott for a few days, but the German attack was expected in a day or two and he considered that at such a critical time his duty lay with his troops at the front. He wrote me a very charming letter explaining all this and said he knew I would understand. He received a great number of letters of congratulation and it made him very happy to think so many

people were thinking and praying "for us three" at that time.

It was just as well that Douglas had decided to return to France at the time he did because the German attack started on the 21st of March, two days before it was expected. The preliminary bombardment was on the front from Arras to a point south of Rheims, but later spread northwards till the attack was delivered on a front of over fifty miles.

By the 26th of March—five days after the attack commenced, sixty-nine enemy divisions had been identified in the forces opposed to the British. The main pressure was brought to bear at a point a little north of where the French and British armies joined. It looked as if the Germans intended to drive a wedge in at this point and separate the two forces and Douglas saw that his only salvation was for the French to support him north of the Somme with a force of at least twenty divisions. At Doullens an allied conference was held at which M. Poincaré, M. Clemenceau, Generals Foch and Pétain, Lord Milner, Sir Henry Wilson and Douglas were present. After the whole situation had been discussed, Douglas's suggestion was agreed upon and it was decided to rush as many French troops as possible to cover Amiens as it was obvious that this was the critical point in the enemy's attack. It was proposed that the operations at this point should be under the command of General Foch, but Douglas at once suggested that the former should direct the actions of all the forces on the western front, and this was at once agreed to by both governments. Foch, therefore, became Generalissimo in France.

The German offensive was continued against the British troops. The Fifth Army was pushed back in spite of the magnificent work they put in. Douglas's trouble was that he had practically no reserves. Criticisms of General Gough, who commanded the Fifth Army and who had borne most of the force of the attack, were sent to Douglas from home.

Douglas pointed out that what was wrong was not Gough's generalship but the fact that the War Cabinet had so weakened the forces and failed to make adequate arrangements for keeping the divisions up to strength that there were not enough men to withstand the German assault. He drew attention to the fact that so many troops had been withdrawn from France that at the beginning of the battle there were about 100,000 fewer men available than in the previous year, and that this depleted force had been attacked by a force three times larger than what they had had to face in the previous year. To these difficulties had to be added the fact that the Government had ordered the British to take over more of the French line, so that the depleted troops were holding fully one-fifth more than they held in the previous autumn. In spite of Douglas's explanations the War Cabinet decided that the Commander of the Fifth Army was at fault and he was therefore brought home.

On the 11th of April Douglas issued his famous "back to the wall" special order. The German advance had continued unceasingly and the British troops had been steadily driven back step by step. The German losses had been enormous but by sheer pressure of numbers they still advanced. Hazebrouck and Calais and the other Channel ports were threatened and every effort had to be made to prevent these points falling into the enemy's hands.

Lord Derby replaced Lord Bertie as British Ambassador in Paris and his place as Secretary of State for War was taken by Lord Milner. The latter called at Douglas's headquarters on his way to London to take over his new appointment.

Douglas was asked by General Foch to relieve four French divisions in a quiet part of the line with four of the British divisions that had been tired out with the heavy fighting so that the fresh French divisions could be used in the battle area. He agreed to do this, but only on the clear

understanding that it was a temporary measure necessary owing to the critical situation and must not be considered as a permanent mixing of French and British troops. He had discussed the proposal with Lord Milner at their meeting, and the latter thoroughly agreed that there was nothing else to do under the circumstances but to accede to Foch's request.

Douglas continued his inspection of the defences. It was far from certain where the enemy intended to make his next main attack, but it was obvious that he was going to launch another attack on a large scale and prisoners' statements confirmed this. Raids by both the French and British were being frequently made and small attacks were made by the enemy but without much strength behind them. These were easily repulsed, and counter-attacks made by the allied forces from time to time considerably improved the situation. This state of affairs continued for some time. Day after day Douglas wrote to me that the situation remained more or less unchanged, but all this time he was very anxious. The troops were in good heart, however, and all were eager for the next attack to commence. American troops had arrived and their presence enabled the sadly depleted British forces to be brought up to strength. It was intended that as soon as the American troops were sufficiently trained and had a staff of their own to command them they would act as an independent force, but in the meantime they were under Douglas's command.

On the 27th of May at three o'clock in the morning the enemy launched his attack. This was preceded by two hours' intensive bombardment. The attack fell on a front of twenty-five miles northwards from a little north of Rheims. The 9th Corps and the French divisions on its left met the onslaught. The constant counter-attacks that had been made on the enemy had, however, considerably weakened his ability to attack and little headway was made. The

training and rest that the British troops had had during the period of comparative calm prior to this attack had been of the utmost value, and with the help of the reinforcements from home and other theatres of war, and the arrival of the American troops, they were able to stem the onrush of the German masses that were hurled against them. Although the enemy managed to gain some ground on the flanks of their attack the 9th Corps in the centre maintained their position and the Germans were prevented from making any further serious advances. By the 2nd of June the position was again satisfactory and the German attack quietened down. A further attack, however, was made about the 9th of June against the French on a twenty-mile front which resulted in the enemy advancing for about four miles towards Marquglise.

The French had had a great many casualties and had used up their divisions at an alarming speed in the fighting on the Aisne. The result was that Foch found himself short of reserves. American divisions were therefore moved south from the British zone and this alarmed Douglas to such a degree that he, believing the safety of the British army was being endangered, communicated his views to London. He was particularly anxious about the matter as there was every reason to believe that the enemy's next assault would be made on the Arras front.

The American troops that had been sent to assist the French fought splendidly and their presence evidently put fresh heart into the French army.

Douglas came over on a few days' leave, arriving on the 6th of July and returning again on the 14th. Unfortunately the weather was broken and we did not get out as much as we would have liked. Still, we did get a good many games of golf in the dry periods and the course, which had been previously hard and burned up, was all the better from a golfing point of view for the rain. While in London Douglas

had a meeting with Lloyd George, who was displeased with the way General Foch had annexed the majority of the American divisions which had arrived in France. Out of the fifteen American divisions that had been transported in British ships since April, nine were employed with the French army, five of which had been equipped by the British. As the Prime Minister was anxious about the lack of reserves to support the troops in the British area, he was naturally annoyed that a greater proportion of the Americans had not been sent to reinforce Douglas's troops.

All the time Douglas was at home the reports from France were very satisfactory. Everything on the British front was comparatively quiet and there were no signs of immediate activity on the part of the Germans.

As soon as he returned to France Douglas applied himself to completing the reconstitution of his forces and by the end of July his task was completed. He found that the success of the attacks made by his troops at various parts of the line had had a splendid effect on the men and everyone was full of confidence. He himself felt that the army was no longer in the tired and depleted state it was a month or two earlier, and although much smaller numerically, it was composed of units up to strength and well trained and capable of taking the offensive at the correct psychological moment.

Meanwhile the French, supported by the 22nd British Corps, launched the attack near Soissons for which General Foch had been making preparations for a long time. This attack met with very great success, and at the end of ten days' fierce fighting the British troops had advanced their line by about four miles on a front of eight thousand yards. So successful had been the start of this operation that the enemy was forced to use up more and more of his reserves, and statements received from prisoners began to show that the Germans seemed no longer preparing for the big attack



which looked so imminent. In fact many reports came to hand that the enemy had completely abandoned the idea of attack and were actually expecting to be attacked by the British troops.

As the result of a conference held on the 23rd of July it was decided that a large combined offensive should be launched early in August by the French, Americans and British. The part Douglas had to play in this operation was to attack east of Amiens in the area held by General Rawlinson and the Fourth Army. He also had under his command for this operation the French First Army, which was to co-operate.

The 4th of August 1918—the fourth anniversary of the war—was a Sunday and Douglas ordered a combined service of thanksgiving to be held at G.H.Q. It had been hoped that the Church of Scotland, the Church of England and the Roman Catholics would all participate, but unfortunately the latter were not permitted to attend a Protestant service. It was suggested that the service should be conducted by a Bishop from England, but Douglas considered that it would be much more in keeping with the significance of the day if the entire service was in the hands of the army chaplains, and it was arranged accordingly.

Once again Douglas was engaged in carefully supervising the preparations that were being made for what was to be the final offensive. As usual before an attack, he personally visited all his corps and divisional commanders and discussed every detail with them. He went very carefully into the training of cavalry units because he never, all through the war, lost faith in the use of cavalry for exploiting a successful attack to the fullest advantage. A week or so before the attack was due to commence, General Foch decided to urge General Pershing to form a complete American corps with its own staff and this was to be placed under Douglas's command also. Later, however, it was

decided that the American divisions should not be put into battle until they could fight as an *army* wholly American. They were, therefore, withdrawn from the British battle front.

The offensive started on the 8th of August, and after an intense bombardment the infantry, supported by large numbers of tanks, advanced. So successful was the attack and so effective the preparation that by the end of the first day's fighting an advance of over six miles had been made.

On the 18th of August M. Clemenceau and Lord Derby arrived from Paris and, after lunch, the former presented Douglas with the Military Medal, which, he said, the French Government had decided to award, on the recommendation of Marshal Foch. Douglas was very proud of this honour and told me that very few officers were given this decoration as it was usually conferred only on private soldiers and was the highest award that could be bestowed on an officer. Later on he received an invitation from General de Laguiche to become a member of the Society of three who had the *Medaille Militaire*, an honour which he readily accepted.

About the end of August Douglas wrote to me about the death of one of his A.D.C.s, Captain George Black—*Georgie*, as Douglas always called him. Captain Black had been with my husband for a very long time and had always done everything possible to save Douglas worry and bother. He had gone to serve with the Tank Corps because he felt that he wanted to take a more active part in the actual fighting, and it was whilst with the tanks that he was killed. Douglas was particularly fond of this young officer and was much cut up when he learned of his death. Shortly before he was killed, the boy had picked up a German bugle and had told Douglas that he was sending it to him for our small son. He was killed before the bugle reached Douglas, but the latter sent it home as soon as it arrived and after the

war he always kept it on his writing-table beside a photograph of George Black which Douglas had received from the mother.

The advance of the allied forces steadily continued. Day after day the enemy were pushed back and large numbers of prisoners and guns were captured. By the 7th of September a wide breach had been made in the enemy's line and troops were in advance of the positions reached in 1917.

Douglas arrived in London on the 9th of September in order to attend a conference at the War Office. He explained how the situation on the western front had greatly changed for the better, and pointed out how thoroughly disorganised the German army had become. The enemy were retreating as fast as they could and hardly offered any resistance at all. What Douglas wanted was large reserves of mobile troops brought from England to France in order that the recent successes could be exploited. He was convinced that if this were done the end could not possibly be far away, but he felt strongly that the magnitude of the success of the operations in progress was not fully realised by the people at home. Douglas was only over for three days and returned to France on the 12th.

On the 18th of September another large attack was successfully made on a front of about eighteen miles in the area held by the Fourth Army. Only in a few places was much resistance offered, although the Germans employed sixteen divisions and later in the day launched several heavy counter-attacks, all of which were repulsed with severe losses to the enemy.

Meanwhile preparations were being pushed on for an extensive attack in the north. This was to be a combined effort by the British Second Army and the Belgian Army under the command of the King of the Belgians himself.

Towards the end of September Douglas received word of the railway strike in England. Although this might seri-

ously affect the supply of ammunition and material, Douglas decided to make no change in his plans. He hoped that some means would be found whereby supplies would be maintained even if the strike continued. All leave, however, was of course stopped.

On the 26th of September the French and American troops started a very large attack and the British followed with theirs on the following day. Bourslon Wood, which had caused so much trouble in November 1917, was captured and operations were again in force around Cambrai. The attack by the Belgians and our Second Army in Flanders was launched on the 28th of September and proved exceptionally successful. The enemy was forced to retire from La Basse, Aubers Ridge and all the places so well known to Douglas when he commanded the First Army in 1915.

The whole of the Hindenburg system of defence had by this time been broken by our onslaughts and early in October Germany asked for an armistice in order to discuss terms for peace. Douglas thought that conditions were so serious with the enemy that the Germans would be prepared to make peace on any terms. He hoped, however, that before any armistice was granted the remnants of the German army would be driven back to the Rhine.

By the 9th of October Cambrai was in the hands of the British and fighting was taking place near Le Cateau, where the expeditionary force concentrated in 1914.

On the 17th of October Douglas was asked by the War Cabinet to go to London to discuss the terms for an armistice, so he crossed on the following day and attended Cabinet meetings on the 19th and 21st, the 20th being a Sunday.

Douglas stressed that the points which ought to be incorporated in the terms were that the Germans should evacuate all Belgian and French territory including Alsace-Lorraine and Metz, and Strasburg handed over to the Allies.

IN HIS TRAIN IN FRANCE, 1917





Also that all the French and Belgian railways should be left intact with rolling-stock so that complete communications could be established for the allied forces which would take up their position on the frontier. He was very much averse to asking the Germans to lay down their arms because he was sure they would never consent to do this and the result would be that the war would probably be continued for another year.

Douglas returned again to France on the 22nd of October. On his way to his headquarters from Calais he inspected two new railway coaches which were being specially fitted for his train, in which he now lived and worked. After the armistice this train was to prove of even greater service to him than it had been in the past. He had found it a great convenience for getting from place to place during an offensive and it saved a very great deal of motoring over bad roads.

General Pershing visited Douglas on the day after his return to Bertincourt, where his advanced headquarters were then. They discussed the proposed terms of the armistice and were in entire agreement. Douglas pointed out that he considered that so far as the allied troops were concerned it would be almost impossible to go on fighting for another year. The French were tired out and had already stopped fighting, whilst the British, who were doing all the fighting, did not seem capable of reinforcing an army greater than about thirty divisions and the American army would not be sufficiently trained and organised to play an important part till the autumn of 1919. General Pershing thoroughly agreed about all these points.

On the 1st of November 1918 Douglas attended a meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles. This was a large gathering of all kinds of nationalities, including Venizelos (the Greek), a Serbian, two Japanese and of course French, Italians and Americans in great force. Douglas was afraid

that the politicians meant to exact very humiliating terms from Germany. This, he thought, would be a great mistake because it would mean that we were merely laying up troubles for the future and might encourage the desire for revenge. Besides, he doubted if Germany was sufficiently low to accept such terms. Looking at the matter from the soldier's point of view he was sure that there were many good officers in Germany who, like himself in similar circumstances, would rather die than accept such conditions.

Rumour had it that the Kaiser had abdicated, however, and it was thought that the new rulers would be ready to buy peace at any price.

Meanwhile, fighting still continued, and though Douglas was kept busy with the troops he spent much time on behalf of the disabled officers and men. The question of an armistice was uppermost in the German mind at this time and Douglas felt that our successes would have a great effect on the enemy. The German peace delegates arrived at Compiègne on the 8th of November, and it was expected that their Government would be likely to accept the terms because, added to the already unsettled state of Germany, a portion of the German fleet was said to have revolted.

Marshal Foch and Admiral Wemyss were appointed to meet the Germans, who started off by asking for an immediate cessation of hostilities. This of course was refused, and Marshal Foch informed them of the terms which the Allies were prepared to offer and which had been arranged at Versailles on the 1st of November. Acceptance or rejection of these terms had to be in the hands of the Allies within seventy-two hours. The peace delegates never for a moment expected such harsh terms and were quite overcome when they heard them. However, a courier was despatched with them to Spa and the German Chancellor's decision was awaited with eagerness.

Actually the courier had considerable difficulty in getting



through to Spa owing to the fact that bridges had been destroyed within the German lines on two of the roads which were attempted. The instructions, however, were brought safely back and the armistice duly signed in Foch's train near Compiègne at five o'clock in the morning. Hostilities were to cease on the 11th of November at 11 A.M.



## CHAPTER X

## ARMISTICE

1918-1919



## CHAPTER X

### ARMISTICE

ON the 11th of November 1918, Armistice Day, I was at Kingston Hill, and on my way to London to attend an important meeting in connection with the scheme for disabled officers' clubs I heard the bells ringing and the guns booming. I found on my arrival such dense crowds that it was impossible to get to my destination, so I waited in the crowd to see the King and Queen show themselves to their people. It was difficult to realise that the war was really at an end, or to rejoice when there were so many sorrowing hearts.

Douglas wrote to me that his first thought was to thank the Power that had guided and guarded him all those anxious years. At the time hostilities ceased he was with his army commanders at Cambrai and an enterprising photographer took them in a group for the cinema.

Prince Fushimi of Japan with his staff and Prince Arthur of Connaught lunched with Douglas in his train and the former presented him with a Japanese Order. The Prince of Wales called on Douglas after lunch. The Prince was then with the Canadians and was on his way to make a short tour of the battlefields.

The news that the Kaiser had gone to Holland arrived in the afternoon and in the evening Douglas received the terms of the armistice, and instructions were issued for an advance to the German frontier, to begin on Sunday, the 17th of November.

Douglas received a very great number of telegrams from every kind of society all over the world, including one from the King in which His Majesty expressed his personal

thanks to him for leading the British armies to victory. He received hundreds of letters too. Many of these contained expressions of thankfulness that the many intrigues against him were unsuccessful. Douglas fully appreciated the fact that the vast majority of his countrymen were alive to what had been done by the army under his orders, but it surprised him that so many people expressed their gratitude to him. He always said that he scarcely deserved that gratitude, and would quote the old Testament, "The battle is not yours but God's". He declared that he had only been an instrument to carry out the Almighty's intentions. Douglas did not talk much about God, but he was confident that through faith in the final result he had been kept well and cheerful. General Horne and other officers in high appointments also regarded the great success and absolute disintegration of the enemy as "the act of God", and Douglas was glad that they should realise how vain our efforts would have been without God's help. He was so disappointed to see that the politicians were entirely given up to electioneering so soon after the armistice and apparently quite forgetful of all our war troubles. He considered they should have been on their knees, thanking God for having preserved the old country and our liberties in spite of their blunders.

Douglas did so look forward to the time when he would get home to peace and quiet. The only thing he dreaded was the public receptions and popularity that would inevitably follow his return.

I was glad to hear from him that he had been able to arrange for £5000 to be transferred from his funds in France for the use of clubs for disabled officers at home. This was a great boon, especially as Douglas hoped that the sum would eventually be given as a donation and not just as a loan.

I had been corresponding with him on the subject and



GROUP AT CAMBRAI ON ARMISTICE DAY





## ARMISTICE

had told him of the difficulties experienced by officers discharged from hospital. Sometimes they had no homes to go to, and I had pointed out that there were various organised clubs who looked after the other ranks in the army but that commissioned officers were evidently just supposed to look after themselves. No one seemed to think it was necessary to have an organisation to assist them, though many needed help desperately.

About this time General Pershing presented Douglas with the American Distinguished Service Cross. It was quite a new thing for the Americans to have decorations at all and Douglas was rather pleased at the distinction. Marshal Foch also visited him and expressed the opinion that if operations had continued for another week there would have been a disaster for the Germans on a far vaster scale than Sedan. Douglas pointed out, however, that the French had stopped fighting as they were quite exhausted, and the Americans had lost the greater part of their trained personnel and their administrative arrangements had broken down. Only the British were still fighting, and if we had stopped, as we should certainly have been forced to do soon to repair the roads and railways in the area over which we were advancing, the enemy would then have had time to reorganise.

On the 19th of November Douglas received a telegram from the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, saying that His Majesty had been pleased to approve that Douglas should have a viscountcy conferred on him in recognition of his services to the Empire as Commander-in-Chief. He immediately replied requesting that any reward for himself might stand over until the Prime Minister had fixed allowances for disabled officers and men as well as gratuities for all ranks of the armies. He received a second telegram on the following day, asking him to reconsider his decision and pointing out that Admiral Beatty had accepted the honour unconditionally. Of course they could not give Beatty the

honour unless Douglas accepted too. Douglas felt very strongly the manner in which the disabled had been disregarded, and he again replied that until the Government gave an assurance that the disabled, the widows and the children, would be adequately provided for, he could not accept a reward of any kind. I had already written to Douglas, before I received his letter telling me of his being offered the viscountcy, urging him not to accept any reward until the Government made some move towards doing something for the disabled. My letter and his describing the action he had taken with regard to the first telegram actually crossed in the post. He was so pleased that I should think the same way as he did about the matter, and he told me that my advice strengthened him in his decision when replying to the Prime Minister's second telegram.

All this time Douglas was sparing no effort to persuade the Army Council of the very urgent need for clubs for ex-officers. He wanted a big organisation quite separate from the Y.M.C.A. to look after them.

I was very anxious to go over to France to visit the battlefields, and Douglas was already going into the question of allowing relatives to visit the graves of the fallen. Transport, however, was difficult to arrange. The number of men allowed home on leave had been greatly increased, and the shortage of coal and the demands made by the armies for rolling stock and locomotives made it impossible to arrange for the conveyance of extra passengers. The cross-Channel boats, too, were taxed to their uttermost. I decided, therefore, to postpone my trip till later, when the transport problem would not be so acute.

The King arrived in France on the 27th of November to visit his victorious troops. He was met by Douglas at Boulogne, and after the various introductions had been made, the whole party, about twenty-two of them, proceeded to the Officers' Club, where Douglas entertained

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them all to luncheon. The party was apparently quite a success and Douglas was very pleased with the excellence of the cooking, which had been done by an ex-officer from the Carlton, London.

Afterwards, when the King was being shown round the club, Douglas took the opportunity of pointing out the need for similar establishments in England.

On the way to Montreuil, His Majesty raised the question of the peerage which had been offered to my husband, but Douglas again asked leave to decline the acceptance of any reward until adequate grants had been voted for the disabled.

Only the King and Sir Clive Wigram stayed with Douglas. The rest of the party were accommodated with other members of G.H.Q. Douglas thought the King was looking well and in the best of spirits. He seemed to enjoy his visit very much. There was a good deal of talk about the Kaiser, who, it appeared, wanted to surrender to Douglas personally and was only prevented from doing so by those around him telling him he would be shot if he attempted such a thing.

On the 30th of November Douglas received a telephone message from the Prime Minister asking him to come to London on the following day, a Sunday, to take part in a ceremonial drive through the streets. Marshal Foch and M. Clemenceau and a number of other statesmen and soldiers from the allied countries were to take part. When Douglas learned that he was to ride with General Sir Henry Wilson in the fifth carriage, he was astounded and considered that this was a greater insult than he could stand even from the Prime Minister. Douglas had effaced himself for the past three years because he considered that to win the war it was essential that the French and British armies should get on well together. He had remained silent when Lloyd George talked of what he (L. G.) had accomplished by his

foresight in appointing Foch as commander-in-chief of the allied forces, although it was Douglas's suggestion made at the conference in March 1918 that Foch should be put in supreme command. Lloyd George had sent armies to Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Salonica. Although Douglas believed that it would have been greatly to our advantage and would have shortened the war had our forces been concentrated on the western front and had consistently expressed this opinion at all War Cabinet meetings, yet he was obliged to give way to Lloyd George for the sake of preventing a serious rift between the army and the politicians. But now that the war had been won by the armies in France, he utterly refused to take part in a purely political stunt by riding in a triumphal procession through the streets of London merely to add to Lloyd George's importance. He therefore sent word that he could not go to London on the 1st of December unless he were ordered to do so by the Army Council.

Douglas was very glad he had adopted this attitude, because afterwards he had a message from Lord Stamfordham asking him not to come to England for Lloyd George's procession as he was quite sure the King would be much displeased if any reception were held during his absence from London. It was later discovered that the proposed triumphal procession was to go to the French Embassy for a reception to which Douglas was not invited. There was, however, to be a car in readiness to take him from Albert Gate to wherever he wanted to go. This was Lloyd George's view of what was fitting for the welcome of a general on his return from commanding a victorious army in the field. It is surely difficult to imagine a greater insult! Douglas said he could never understand what Lloyd George's object was in trying to belittle the British army, unless it was that he was afraid that it might interfere with what Douglas called "his schemes of revolution and Bolshevism".

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As the army advanced towards the Rhine, the lines of communication of course were lengthened and considerable difficulty was occasioned in getting telephone communication through for working the trains. Douglas, however, always gave great credit to his Quartermaster-General and the Director-General of Transport for their efficiency in maintaining the services under great difficulties. The troops always had full rations, although the French advanced units, on the other hand, were on half rations for some time and the Americans on one occasion had nothing at all for three days. This was all the more to the credit of our staff, because the break in the railways which had to be repaired by us was much greater than in the case of either the French or Americans.

Douglas was very troubled by the reports that were coming through from Spa, where the International Committee were arranging details as to carrying out the terms of the armistice. It appeared that the French wanted to use the armistice as a military weapon to destroy both the military and political existence of the Germans, and Douglas thought that such an action would be disastrous, as there would then be no stable government east of the Rhine and Italy, and we would constantly be having to send troops here, there and everywhere to restore order.

Douglas wanted to make his *official* return to London with his army commanders and heads of branches from G.H.Q. on the 20th of December. He felt if there must be *an arrival* it should in the first instance be purely for the British army and its commanders, and that they should on no account be mixed up with politicians and statesmen from other nations. He, however, hated ovations of any kind and said he would much rather go off unnoticed in a taxi from the station with me. There seemed to be a considerable amount of hesitancy on the part of the Government regarding the welcome in London to Douglas and his army

commanders. Douglas wanted a genuine welcome or none at all.

When the King was returning to England after his visit to France, Douglas met him at Calais and learned that His Majesty had been very pleased with his trip. The King seemed very anxious to arrange for the public welcome in London on the 20th of December, and thought that Douglas and the others ought to ride from the station through the streets to Buckingham Palace. This was Douglas's opinion too, for he considered it was ridiculous to see a number of officers coming back from war in a string of carriages or motor-cars, like a lot of politicians or old women! As soon as His Majesty got back to London it was decided that he should welcome Douglas and his army commanders at lunch in Buckingham Palace, and that later a public welcome would be given to the troops, who would take part in a procession through the streets. Douglas at once instructed the Adjutant-General to arrange for a procession on horseback of the senior officers of G.H.Q. General Fowke, the A.G., was a very big man and Douglas was much concerned about getting a suitable horse for him. He did not ride much as a rule. It was eventually decided, however, that they should *drive* from Charing Cross by the Mall to Buckingham Palace in carriages "like old women in the family way", as Douglas wrote to me.

Meantime I was having a lot of trouble and worry with influenza at Eastcott. My housemaid had died, and this of course had rather upset me. My small son, too, had been very ill and Douglas's concern was shown very clearly in all his letters. It was typical of him to enclose a copy of the 91st Psalm with one of his letters, saying that it was very comforting in times of trouble to read it.

Douglas had been invited by Marshal Foch to take part in the French rejoicings over getting back Alsace-Lorraine, and on the 8th of December he arrived in Metz, where he

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met Marshals Joffre, Foch and Pétain and a number of senators and deputies from Paris waiting for the President. After M. Poincaré had arrived with M. Clemenceau and had shaken hands with all the important people present, they all drove off in carriages. Douglas was in the fourth vehicle with General Pershing. They drove first to the Esplanade, where, after a congratulatory speech, the President presented Pétain with the baton of a Marshal of France. After that they drove all round the town. Douglas had lunch in the President's train. In the afternoon the whole procession started off again on their way to the Hotel de Ville, where the Maire made a speech. When President Poincaré had replied, they took up their position at the front of the building and watched a march-past of all sorts of societies. Douglas was standing beside M. Clemenceau and was very impressed by the extraordinarily moving spectacle. They then proceeded to the Cathedral.

Douglas was greatly pleased with the kindness with which he was received everywhere. When the crowds were particularly dense he invariably found himself being pushed forward by some kind friend who would call out "Make way for Marshal Haig", and a gap would at once open to allow him to pass. In the Cathedral a friendly priest took charge of him when he had been jostled out of his place behind the President, and took him round some pillars when Douglas found himself, much to his surprise, leading the procession!

Before the end of the celebrations Foch told Douglas that the French considered that their arrival in Metz was the completion of all their wishes. He was particularly pleased that Douglas was with them to take part in their rejoicings, and he again thanked Douglas for the "tenacity and determination" he, as commander-in-chief of the British army, had shown in the attacks. Douglas told me that the old man was quite sincere when he added, "It was your

leadership which enabled the Allies to end the war this autumn”.

The same sort of celebrations took place in Strasburg the next day. Douglas was very struck by the enthusiasm of the populace, that was so evident everywhere, at becoming French again.

At home preparations were now in full swing for the general election. Douglas felt that Lloyd George had in some way cheated and got the better of the people, and thought that this was an “un-English” thing for a Prime Minister to do. However, Douglas made every possible effort to enable the soldiers to find out all about the various candidates and to give their votes, but there was a general apathy about the whole matter. There was the same sort of feeling amongst the troops as there was at home. They felt that they had been got at by the Prime Minister holding an election at that time. Douglas felt this too, and did not think Lloyd George could really be trusted. He, however, voted for the Coalition Government as being better than the alternatives—*Labour* and *Liberal*.

Thinking that they would be much appreciated, I sent out to Douglas some of his photographs with nice frames to suit, so that he could autograph and send them to our army friends by way of a Christmas greeting. Douglas complained jokingly of the amount of work this entailed, but he despatched about three dozen with a little note for each. He was greatly pleased with the frames I had chosen and admired them very much. He wrote and told me that he had sent one to M. Clemenceau, who, he said, had been a good friend to him.

Everybody was immensely pleased at getting the photographs and Douglas said he thought it was a very happy idea to give them at that time.

On the 16th of December Douglas arrived at Cologne, which the army had reached a day or two before. At the



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Hohenzollern Bridge twenty-five press correspondents under Major Lytton had congregated for Douglas to bid them good-bye. He got out of his car and shook hands with each one. He then gave them a short address and presented them all with a Union Jack in memory of such a historic occasion. Major Lytton told Douglas afterwards that his farewell was much appreciated by all the correspondents of the allied and neutral countries.

Douglas was thoroughly satisfied with the arrangements made for the Army of Occupation and thought the troops would be very comfortable in Germany.

The day of the King's welcome to Douglas and his army commanders was changed from the 20th to the 19th and he returned from his tour of the forward area on the 18th.

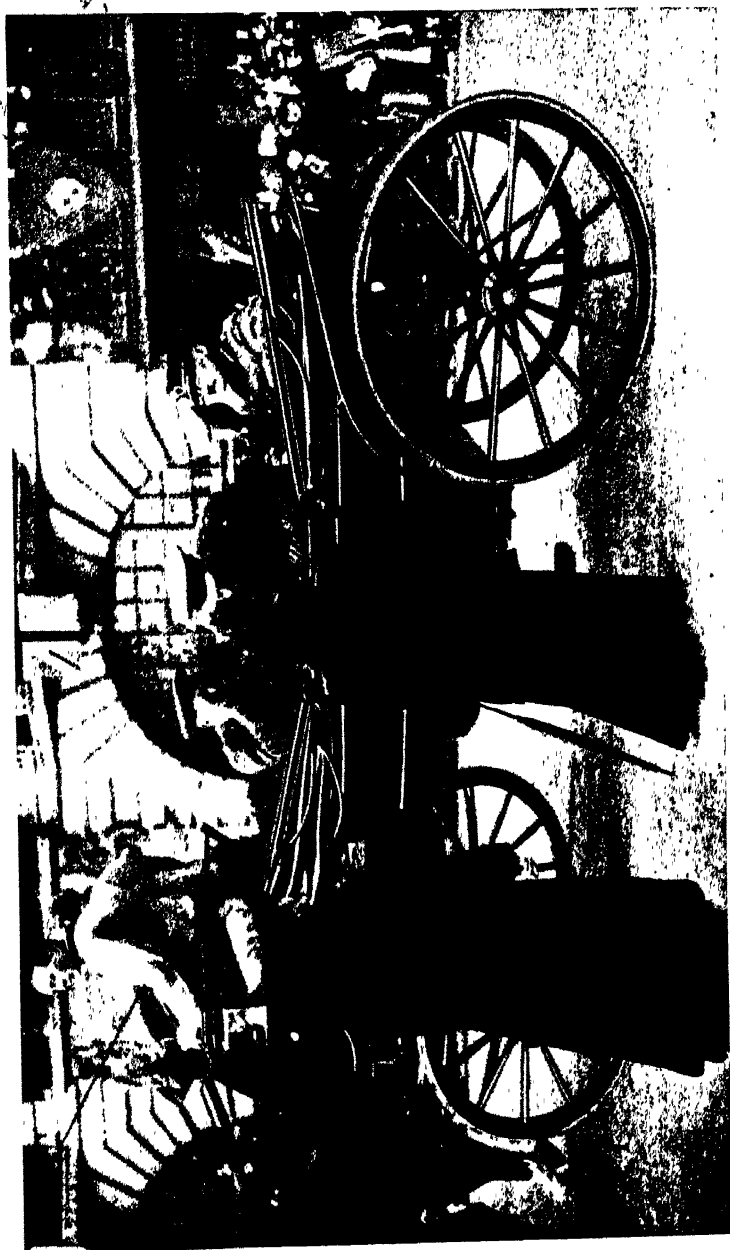
Douglas was to receive an address from the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses at Dover on his arrival there, but as the ceremony would be very short, I decided not to go down for it, although Admiral Keyes had very kindly offered to put me up at Dover the night before, as the ceremony was to take place early in the forenoon. The ceremony at Dover passed off very satisfactorily and several addresses of welcome were read to Douglas, who replied to them. As they drove from the docks to the station, where the addresses were delivered, the routes were lined with great masses of the population, who cheered enthusiastically. Douglas said he had no idea there were so many people in Dover and that there was no doubt that the welcome they gave him came from their hearts.

The train arrived at Charing Cross exactly at one o'clock. The Duke of Connaught and the Prime Minister were opposite the door when the train stopped, and the former welcomed Douglas on behalf of the King. Henrietta had gone to the station to see her brother arrive, and he caught sight of her as he was in the middle of inspecting the Guard

of Honour. He went across to her and kissed her and then proceeded with the inspection. After he had inspected the Guard of Honour he shook hands with the host of notables who had come to meet him. Among those on the platform were members of the War Cabinet, Admiralty and Army Council, also Mr. Asquith, Sir Evelyn Wood and many others. No time was lost in getting into the Royal carriages in which they were to drive to Buckingham Palace. Queen Alexandra had very kindly invited me and my two girls to view the procession with her from Marlborough House, and I had warned Douglas to be on the look-out for the Queen-Mother as he passed. When Douglas's carriage came opposite, therefore, he stopped it, and Queen Alexandra and I and the girls came forward and shook hands with him. Queen Alexandra took some flowers from her dress and gave them to Douglas, and then the procession passed on. The route was not lined with troops. The reception was essentially a welcome of the people, and the cheering from the great masses of all classes was tremendous. Douglas said that although he had attended many functions as A.D.C. to King Edward, he had never before seen such crowds or such whole-hearted enthusiasm. Douglas was at once received by the King when they reached Buckingham Palace. It was undoubtedly by the King's thoughtfulness and his personal intervention that such a splendid welcome had been made possible, and Douglas was very conscious of this fact. About fifty of us then sat down to lunch. Douglas and I sat exactly in the same places as at our wedding breakfast—he on the left of the Queen and I on the right of the King.

After lunch Douglas was photographed with the King by His Majesty's desire, and then with the army commanders with the King in the centre.

Just before leaving France Douglas heard that another telegram was on its way from the Prime Minister. This time



QUEEN ALEXANDRA WELCOMING DOUGLAS IN FRONT OF MARLBOROUGH HOUSE



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he was to be offered an earldom. Douglas decided, however, to ask that all thought of reward should be delayed until after he had seen the Prime Minister. Lord Stamfordham spoke to Douglas about the matter and argued that Beatty would be made an Earl and Plumer a Viscount, and pointed out that it would be difficult to find a reason for not rewarding him. An excellent excuse had been given why Douglas had not come over with Foch. They had said that the King required his presence in France, and Douglas suggested to Lord Stamfordham that he was sure an equally good reason for his not accepting a reward could be found, but he thought that they should tell the truth and simply say he wished no reward until the army had been provided for.

After we left Buckingham Palace we went to Marlborough House and called on Queen Alexandra, who was very delighted to see us. The five army commanders and Douglas's personal staff accompanied us. The Queen had expressed her desire to me, to receive them.

We got home to Eastcott about 5 P.M., and in the evening a huge mass of about ten thousand people congregated with torches and bands outside the house. The crowd mainly consisted of men and women from the Sopwith Aeroplane Works and this was their way of welcoming Douglas home to Kingston. Of course Douglas went out and said a few words to them and watched them march past. The wonderful and spontaneous welcome that he received all the way from Dover to Kingston Hill showed that the people of England realised what had been accomplished by the army under his command.

During the few days before Christmas, Douglas and I played a lot of golf. Sometimes we went to London to shop, but we lived very quietly enjoying each other's company, knowing that all the strain and worry of the last few years was finished. I was rather concerned about Douglas's comfort being interfered with. Influenza had depleted my staff

of servants and I had found it impossible to replace them. Douglas, however, was so glad to be home that he would not allow me to worry over the matter. He was always so easily satisfied and wanted very little. We spent Christmas quietly with the children.

The few remaining days before Douglas returned to France were filled with many social and official engagements.

We went to the Guildhall and saw President Wilson admitted as a Freeman of the City of London, and as we walked from the hall to the Mansion House for lunch, Douglas was soon spotted by the crowd. The others who were with us, seeing that it was Douglas that the people were interested in, fell back and the great crowd surged in behind us, according us a most whole-hearted welcome. They cheered us on, and shook hands with Douglas and behaved in a really most friendly fashion.

Early in January there was trouble at Folkestone over the demobilisation of certain "leave men". Sir Henry Wilson came down to Eastcott to tea and discussed the matter with Douglas, who advised Sir Henry to insist on the men obeying their orders first of all. Douglas thought it was a great mistake to make terms with the mutineers and give way to them. He thought that the trouble should have been handled firmly at the outset and then it would not have spread. Sir Henry Wilson thoroughly agreed with Douglas's point of view. Douglas was quite convinced that the trouble was entirely due to politicians meddling in military matters in ignorance of the situation. He declared that demobilisation should have been left in the hands of the military authorities.

When Douglas returned to France he found much the same state of unrest there as at home with regard to demobilisation. The trouble seemed to be caused mainly by a series of articles that had appeared in certain sections of the press, but at Douglas's request a severe rebuke was

administered by the Government to the particular papers concerned and this helped to quieten things.

Douglas advocated that demobilisation orders should be modified to suit the situation of the army. The Government had been issuing orders and counter orders which had a very unsettling effect amongst the men, and the difficulties of the situation had been greatly intensified by the fact that most of the best N.C.O.s had already been taken away. Douglas returned to London on the 14th of January to attend a meeting with Mr. Winston Churchill, who had that day taken over the seals of office of Secretary of State for War. Douglas stressed the importance of forming an army of occupation at once otherwise we would not be in a position to negotiate a lasting peace, but this meant that the demobilisation scheme in force would require to be scrapped and another substituted in its place. Mr. Churchill was evidently in agreement on this point, and Douglas was greatly impressed by the courage and foresight shown by the new Secretary of State for War when he intimated that he was prepared to take the responsibility of making this change.

After Mr. Churchill had taken the necessary action for the new scheme to be carried out, Mr. Lloyd George, who was in Paris at the time, was not at all pleased that the matter had been pressed forward with such speed. He considered that he should have been consulted more in the matter, and the result was that Douglas was asked to accompany Mr. Churchill to Paris so that the whole matter could be laid before the Prime Minister. Churchill was most anxious that Douglas should organise the new army of occupation before handing over his command in France. The politicians were apparently all more afraid of facing the House of Commons with a new scheme of demobilisation than of the effect of having no army of occupation. Douglas had made it very clear that if demobilisation was proceeded with under the original plan there certainly would

be no army of occupation worth talking about, and that we would be at the mercy of the Germans in regard to certain terms of peace.

It was fortunate for Douglas's health that he had had to come to England for these meetings. He had a touch of influenza before he left France and his doctor was very much against his travelling at all. However, his short stay at Eastcott helped greatly to set him up again and he was quite cured by the time he left with Mr. Churchill for Paris.

At the meeting of the Supreme War Council held in Paris, Douglas supported strongly the views put forward by Mr. Lloyd George but emphasised again the necessity of maintaining a sufficiently strong army of occupation. The Prime Minister, who was more concerned with disarming Germany than forming a competent army of occupation, thanked Douglas for his support. Douglas often wondered what Lloyd George had expected him to do, for he seemed very surprised that he had such staunch backing from the military members of the conference. However, Lloyd George ultimately gave his approval of the scheme submitted by Mr. Churchill.

While he was in Paris, Douglas met Mr. Arthur Henderson, who had come from Switzerland at the request of Mr. Balfour. Douglas thought very highly of him and declared he had been much maligned by Lloyd George. Mr. Henderson was very outspoken and told Douglas that he went to Russia under orders from Lloyd George when the latter was favourably inclined towards the Bolsheviks. During his absence, however, Lloyd George had changed his policy and had simply dismissed Henderson from office.

Douglas himself found it difficult to agree with the Government's action in Russia. He considered that they had simply handed over the helpless people of Russia to be plundered and murdered by Bolsheviks.



## ARMISTICE

Douglas again had to come to London early in February in order to discuss a proposal he had made in respect of the ordnance shops and railwaymen in the back areas. These were already being worked on almost non-military lines and Douglas thought it would be far better to put them on an entirely civilian basis at once.

Douglas developed a slight chill and I tried to get him to stay in bed as much as possible, but he took this opportunity of furthering his plans regarding the disabled officers' fund and clubs and insisted on paying many visits on this account. He returned to his headquarters on the 8th of February, and found to his joy that the new scheme for demobilisation was giving great satisfaction. The men realised that it was based on justice—the men who had been out the longest were to go home first.

Douglas had to go to Paris again to meet Foch, who wanted to start an offensive all up and down the front to force the Germans to adhere to the terms of the armistice. Douglas, however, pointed out that this was impossible on account of the skeleton nature of the British divisions, and suggested that it would be just as easy to make a preliminary peace as to go on extending the armistice. It appears that President Wilson was the stumbling-block, but after the meeting of the allied governments' representatives Douglas wrote and told me that the suggestions which he himself favoured for making a preliminary peace had eventually been accepted. Douglas, of course, had then to go several times to Paris, as he had been put on the committee which was to formulate the military terms that were to be given to the Germans. M. Clemenceau was very kind to Douglas at all his meetings with him in Paris and seemed quite attached to him. Douglas, of course, was really very fond of Clemenceau and was much distressed when he was shot at by a French anarchist during one of Douglas's visits to Paris. Douglas felt at the time that it would be a very

great loss to the Peace Conference if the old man were laid up for any time.

Meantime Douglas had to arrange a tour for Admiral Beatty and some other naval officers. The Admiral wanted to stay in Brussels, which was not in Douglas's territory and therefore rather difficult to arrange. Douglas was very disappointed that Beatty and his companions saw so little of the British battlefields, although he had gone to a great deal of trouble to arrange for them to be shown the scenes of all the important fighting. Unfortunately most of their time was spent in Belgian towns, so that the only really important battlefield they saw was Monchy-le-Preux near Arras.

At the end of February Douglas was still having communications from the Government regarding the title they were so anxious to confer on him. I had written him imploring him not to accept a large grant, but he had already sent Philip Sassoon, armed with a long list of instructions to guide him, to discuss the matter with the Prime Minister. In these notes Douglas definitely stated that he only wanted a sufficient pension to enable him to live in a simple way without monetary anxieties for the rest of his life.

It was arranged that I should go over to France for "my tour" on the 19th of March. Philip Sassoon had been very kind in making arrangements for me. It was proposed that I should meet Douglas at Beaurepaire. Before that date, however, it had been decided to appoint Douglas commander-in-chief of the home forces and Sir William Robertson to command the army on the Rhine, and the Secretary of State for War, being anxious that Douglas should take over his new command as soon as possible, suggested that he should come to London to consult Sir William Robertson at an early date. Douglas, therefore, came to London on the 17th, had his meetings with Winston Churchill and Sir William Robertson, and together we crossed to France on the 20th—a very much nicer arrange-

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ment for me than that originally planned. My sister Alexandra and Colonel Heseltine accompanied us.

We were all in great spirits and reached Boulogne after a satisfactory crossing.

While on my tour of the battlefields I decided to keep a diary of all I did. I am so glad now that I did this, as I am able to give details of the trip which might otherwise have slipped from my memory. The following account therefore consists largely of extracts taken from my diary.

On the evening of the 20th of March we arrived at Douglas's headquarters, Château Beaurepaire, Montreuil. Our journey was most comfortable and I found that travelling in the company of the commander-in-chief meant no trouble about passports and luggage. There was always someone to look after such details! We drove from Boulogne to Montreuil in two beautiful Rolls-Royce cars. It was indeed interesting to see the headquarters where Douglas had lived for so long. Everything was very simple but quite comfortable, and I was struck by the smooth running of the domestic arrangements. Of course, all the work in the house was done by men, and we had an excellent dinner, beautifully cooked, after we arrived. Besides my sister, Colonel Heseltine, Douglas and myself, there were also at dinner General Lawrence and Captain Straker. I was very excited about this trip and slept exceedingly badly the first night, although my bed was very comfortable. I was given the room next to Douglas's.

In the morning my sister and I visited three hospitals at Le Touquet. They were all very well organised and so clean. The work of the V.A.D.s was very highly praised by the matrons. We also saw over a veterinary hospital where we were shown the theatre for performing operations on horses. This hospital was beginning to be closed down and was only being used for passing through horses which were being sold to the French. On our return for lunch we met General

## THE MAN I KNEW

Fowke, the Adjutant-General, Colonel Bacon of the American Mission and Major Borrison.

After lunch we set out for Cassel. On the way we passed Blendecques, where Douglas had his headquarters during the fighting at Messines and Passchendaele. Cassel, of course, stands high and the headquarters there was a much better built house than Beaurepaire. Monsieur Desholt, the owner, and his wife welcomed us very warmly. They were so distressed that the heating apparatus had broken down and that the lights had gone wrong, but in spite of these inconveniences I thought it was all very comfortable indeed.

The next day, 22nd of March, we started at ten o'clock in the morning, and passing through Caestre, Meteren, Bailleul, Neuve-Église, Wulverghem, Messines and Wytschaete we came to Ypres. From Caestre onwards the desolation of the villages became worse and worse. Meteren was practically flat and nothing left of it at all. We gazed at the famous battlefield while Douglas told us what had happened at various places and pointed out Mont des Cats and Kemmel in the distance. The British had held Kemmel month after month, but it had been evacuated by the French in 1918 and their doing so had caused Douglas grave anxiety.

Ypres stood out so clearly, with all its buildings in ruins, but such an eloquent memorial of the bravery and tenacity of our troops who had seen so much fighting there and had held on grimly through all the efforts of the Germans to dislodge them. Douglas pointed out where one of his headquarters had been, opposite the Cathedral. We could see Château des Trois Tours in the distance.

From Ypres we went on to Gheluvelt. We passed where once had stood Hooge Château but there was nothing of it left. This was the first time Douglas had gone down the Menin Road since 1914 and he was almost as interested as I was! He recalled the position of some of the many fine houses that had been standing during those early days but

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which were now no more. We passed his old headquarters at "Hell Fire Corner", and there we saw Prince Maurice's grave. There was nothing left of the White Château which had stood at the Menin Road crossing.

We walked towards Zandvoorde from Gheluvelt trying to find my sister's husband's grave. Walking was very difficult as there were so many shell-holes full of water, and we did not succeed in our quest. Colonel Heseltine, however, had gone off on his own and was successful in finding the grave, but as it was about two and a half miles away, we decided to go back there the following morning, and so returned to Cassel for the night. Although I had heard plenty of descriptions of the terrible desolation, I was certainly quite unprepared for the scenes which we encountered. I had no idea that there could be such utter chaos and destruction, and the sight of it all appalled me.

Starting off next morning, we went straight to Ypres through Steenvoorde and Poperinghe. Alighting near Gheluvelt, we were led by Colonel Heseltine down a track for some two and a half miles till we came to my brother-in-law's grave. We found it close to the ridge where he was killed in October 1914.

We had lunch and afterwards drove to Passchendaele Ridge, from which we looked down on Langemarck and Poelcappelle. The village was quite gone and the trees were very much knocked about. Great masses of twisted iron were all over the place. Douglas was intensely interested in the state of the ground for he had not seen it since 1918.

The following day (24th of March) we drove through Ypres, Oostvleteren, Furnes, Pervyse, Schoorbakke, St. Pierre Capelle, and then north to Ostend. We then followed the coast to Zeebrugge. Between Ostend and Zeebrugge we saw many German gun emplacements and fire-control posts, all still very complete and strongly constructed. At Zeebrugge we saw the damage done to the Mole by H.M.S. *Vindictive*,

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and also Captain Fryatt's ship the *Brussels*, which with two small gun-boats, *Thetis* and *Iphigenia*, had been sunk in the mouth of the harbour. We lunched at the Mole, but the high wind and the sand blowing about made it a most unpleasant spot. Besides, it was very cold. We drove on to Bruges, where we saw the docks. There were no German submarines left there by that time, so we looked round the town, which was very little damaged, and then returned to Cassel by Thourout, Roulers, Menin and Ypres. The bridges at the exits from Bruges had all been blown up during the German retreat in October 1918.

This day's outing let me understand for the first time just where the Germans had been. Douglas explained how they had come up the Menin Road in 1914 and pointed out Mont Kemmel, Mont Noir, Mont Rouge and Mont des Cats, all of which had been so important as dominating hills. One could not but be struck by the strength and thoroughness of the construction of the German gun emplacements and buildings. The country, now bare and desolate, must have been so different during the fighting round Ypres in 1914 when it was quite well wooded.

The next day we visited Hazebrouck, where we saw Douglas's old headquarters, which he occupied from the 22nd of November to the 22nd of December 1914. We also saw the house where Lord French stayed during the Neuve Chapelle fighting. We then drove through what was left of the Forest of Nieppe (which had been strongly fortified and which the Germans had almost reached in the spring of 1918), on our way to Hinges, Douglas's headquarters as commander of the 1st Corps in December 1914, and again for the four months preceding his appointment as commander-in-chief in December 1915. As we passed through St. Venant, Douglas pointed out where he and Lord Kitchener had discussed conscription in July 1915, and also where smoke candles had been made for the fighting at

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Loos. The headquarters at Hinges were pretty well destroyed, all except the observation tower. It was from this tower that Douglas had watched the direction of the wind so anxiously before Loos when we used gas for the first time. From Hinges we proceeded to Chocques, where Douglas stayed during the Festubert fighting in June and July 1915, and then on to Bethune, which was almost completely destroyed. We then passed through Beuvry, Annequin, Cuinchy (where the brick stacks were), to the railway triangle at La Bassée, where on the south bank of the canal we saw some of the deep, well-constructed dugouts used by the Germans. We continued our drive through Illies and Herlies on to Aubers Ridge, where we had lunch. Douglas explained how the machine-guns, placed in a house east of Neuve Chapelle, had prevented the ridge from being taken. From the crest of the ridge we obtained a fine view of the battlefields all round. After lunch we went to Laventie and then on to Neuve Chapelle. We passed through Fauquissart and saw the road where General Gough was wounded. From Neuve Chapelle we went to Estaires, where we visited General Gough's grave. The church had once had a high tower that was used by Douglas to observe Aubers Ridge. The tower, however, was no longer there! On our way home to Cassel we passed through his advanced headquarters during Neuve Chapelle. The house, however, was quite destroyed in April 1918.

We left Cassel on the 27th of March. Douglas gave Monsieur and Madame Desholt a signed framed photograph of himself when we said good-bye to them. They were most kind and told Douglas that he must always think of the château as his headquarters and make use of it as such whenever he wanted.

We went via Hazebrouck to La Motte, where there had been very heavy fighting. Indeed the Germans had tried hard to get into the forest there and had actually got to

within a hundred yards of it. Passing through Merville and Estaires we followed the road to La Bassée and saw the distillery where the great struggle in 1915 had taken place. The ground there was very boggy and the Germans must have had a difficult time. Severe fighting had also taken place round Rue d'Ouvert, Violaines and Givenchy, all of which we passed through. After driving through La Bassée and Haines we saw St. Éloi, which was captured in 1915 but lost again later. We went up on to a hill and looked down on Vermelles, Rocroi Farm and the Hohenzollern Redoubt. Loos lay down in the hollow and we could see over the edge of Hulluch, "Hill 70" and "Tower Bridge". Then we went on to Lens. There the havoc was terrible. An enormous town laid flat. We saw and talked to a number of poor people searching in the ruins presumably for their belongings. The town looked as if it had been about the size of Manchester and must at one time have been a flourishing community with all its coal mines. We continued our journey south to Vimy Ridge, which the Canadians had captured in April 1917. Thence we proceeded past Thélus, Gavrelle and Pont du Jour, from which we could see Monchy-le-Preux and Tilloy Wood in the distance, on to Arras, Delville, Beaumetz, and finally arrived at Bavincourt, where we were going to stay. Here Douglas had his headquarters during the latter part of the fighting at Arras. At the beginning of the battle of Arras he was at Henchin in the St. Pol area. Arras itself was not nearly so knocked about as Lens.

Douglas's headquarters at Bavincourt was a fine château with big rooms and most comfortable. The house was being run by a servant and her two daughters, who were expecting their mistress home in a few days.

On the 27th of March, Douglas unfortunately had to leave us, to go to Cologne and Brussels. Colonel Heseltine went with him and Captain Morton came to join us and act as our guide. We retraced our route of the previous afternoon,



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through Beaumetz and Arras on our way to Cambrai, where we tried to get into Nôtre Dame Church. All the doors were locked, but Colonel Ryan found the Vicar-General, who volunteered to get the keys. None of them, however, would fit the locks, so we had to come away without going in after all. The Vicar-General was very bitter against the Germans for so spitefully damaging the church, but the old man seemed very grateful to the British for what they had done for France. We had lunch in a Red Cross Stationary Hospital and then drove to Bourlon Wood, where we saw many very deep dugouts and some crippled tanks lying about. There were also many isolated graves to be seen there. We returned to Bavincourt by way of Avesnes and Achiet-le-Grand.

The following day, 28th of March, we drove to Bapaume. All along the road the villages were quite flattened and there seemed to be trenches everywhere. We passed through Ervillers, Sapignies, Le Transloy, Sailly Sallisel and Bouchavesnes, where the bridge had been blown up. We climbed Mont St. Quentin and saw the scene of the splendid capture by the Australians. On we went through Péronne, which was very badly damaged, to Cléry-sur-Somme and Maricourt Ridge. This was a wonderful plateau where there was a fierce fight in 1918. We lunched in some ruins in Méricourt and then drove on again through Mametz to Albert. We looked at the Cathedral but were very disappointed. We did not think the ruins looked at all interesting, and there was no sign of the beautiful Virgin Mary. We were told that the figure was really made of papier-mâché and not of bronze as was commonly supposed. The whole of the town, however, had been frightfully knocked about by the British shelling in 1918. From Albert we passed through Contalmaison, which had taken so long to capture, and then on to Bazentin-le-Petit and Bazentin-le-Grand, through Mametz Wood, Death Valley, Montauban Ridge,

Trones Wood, Longueval and Delville Wood. We walked up High Wood, the scene of tremendous fighting. Everywhere there were signs of the terrible struggles which had taken place. There were also many graves scattered all over the hill. We saw several memorials which had been erected to various regiments which had taken prominent parts in the fighting. One could sense the terrible casualties that must have occurred on that hill. After passing through Pozières, Courcellette and Le Sars we walked up the Butte de Warlencourt. This high mound was captured by the 5th Division in 1916. After that we drove back to Bavincourt. We had seen the remains of the terrible fighting during the first Somme battles of 1916, and it was very sad to see such miles of devastated country and to think of all the villages that had been there and had now completely disappeared.

The next day, 29th of March, we drove through Doullens, Talnus and Villers-Bocage to Amiens. In Doullens we passed Le Bon Air house, the notorious house where Douglas lunched one day without knowing of its ill repute. A stupid story about this place had reached me. Douglas as a rule always lunched in the open air out of a luncheon basket that I had given him at the outbreak of the war. He found it saved a lot of time and he much preferred it. One wet day, however, he had been forced to take his lunch indoors and had been guided by Major Heseltine, his A.D.C., to a harmless-looking farmhouse. Here a charming lady in charge had insisted on adding to the luncheon brought by them an appetising omelette and other delicacies. I had been told that the lady, to give Douglas and his A.D.C. a pleasant surprise, had then introduced them to some lovely young females effectively grouped in a beautiful mirrored room and scantily dressed in veils of coloured tulle. But whether the introductions had been successfully accomplished had been left to my imagination. I had no doubt of what my husband's actions would be under such circumstances, but

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the story was too good not to chaff him about it when writing to him. I pointed out that no mention of this happening had been noted by him in his diary! In his reply he told me that there had been no young females and that the house was then occupied only by the lady who had supplied the omelette and who was quite middle-aged. She had taken Douglas and his A.D.C. over the premises and some photographs in the rooms showed that the house must have had a past history, but he added that I had evidently not heard the best part of the story, which was that two of his army commanders and their A.D.C.s noticing his car outside had joined him, being quite ignorant of the disrepute of the house.

In Amiens we were deeply impressed by the sight of the Cathedral. It had been pretty badly destroyed, but even in its ruined state it gave us the impression that it must have been very beautiful at one time. After lunch in the town we drove to Bois-l'Abbé. We were told how the Australians attacked this place day and night and took it in brilliant style in March 1918. As long as we held that position the Germans were prevented from seeing Amiens. We then walked up a hill and saw in the two woods captured by the French and British on the 8th of August 1918 many machine-gun emplacements. We also saw quite clearly where the tanks had come through, destroying the machine-guns, and trampling down the wire. Captain Morton pointed out to us the positions occupied by the Germans, British and French at this point just before the attack. After that we went to Villers-Bretonneux, which was the starting-off place of the final offensive. The town was taken by the Australians at the same time as they captured Bois-l'Abbé in March. We drove to Varennes and looked at General Philip Howell's grave in the cemetery there. I placed a cross on the grave and took a photograph of it to give to Mrs. Howell. We then drove to Beauquesne, where Douglas had his headquarters during

the 1916 fighting. We saw the house where he stayed at that time and were shown his writing-room. It had been turned into a billiard-room, but the lady of the house did not seem at all anxious to show us any more of the rooms. When Douglas was there the mother was living in the house, but she had moved to a smaller place, and when we visited it the daughter-in-law with the son were in possession. We returned to Bavincourt by Doullens.

On the 30th of March we drove through Arras and Bapaume to Bertincourt, where we saw the siding where Douglas kept his train during the last fighting round Cambrai. We then passed the Canal du Nord—the main Hindenburg defence line—and reached Havrincourt. We saw Boulton Wood and Flesquières on our left, and then visited Major Porter's grave at Fins. After crossing the Canal St. Quentin we saw the tremendously thick wire that the Germans used all the way along to protect the Hindenburg Line. At Bellicourt Canal crossing, it was explained to us how the men cut this huge mass of wire, swam across and climbed up the steep bank and captured the village. When we came to Ricasel Bridge we heard that it was here that a certain corporal was awarded the V.C. for a very gallant act. The Germans were on the point of blowing up the bridge, but the corporal managed to dash in and prevent them doing so. We returned to Bavincourt by St. Quentin and found that Colonel Fletcher had arrived.

The following day we drove to Le Cateau for lunch, and returned following the road up which the cavalry had advanced in 1918. Le Cateau appeared to have been very little touched. We were nearing the end of our tour now and on the 1st of April we returned to Montreuil in time for lunch. Douglas had arrived early the same morning. In the afternoon my sister and I went to see the Transportation Offices at La Calotterie. The huge maps with the various lines of railway marked on them were very interesting. General

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Crookshank explained to us all that had been done. He then took us to the W.A.A.C.'s huts and introduced us to the commandante. We were shown all round the cubicles, kitchen and scullery. All the arrangements were excellent and the girls looked happy and well, and thoroughly appreciated the huge recreation room put up by the Y.W.C.A., where many good dances were held.

The following day we spent in Montreuil itself, where Captain Morton took us round, showing us first the École, where all the G.H.Q. offices were. We then walked round the ramparts, from which we had a beautiful view. After that we visited the hut which Professor Duncan used for his Church of Scotland services.

Douglas handed over command to General Plumer on the 2nd of April. He spent practically the whole forenoon saying good-bye to his staff, or what was left of them. In the evening we attended a concert given by G.H.Q. at the Officers' Club. The Mayor and all the prominent citizens of Montreuil were there, and Douglas and I were introduced to all the principal ladies present. Douglas was very amused when the Mayor wanted to make them all pace in front of him as he introduced them. In the evening I saw Douglas off in his train to Paris on his way to Chaumont, where he was to say good-bye to General Pershing, commander-in-chief of the American forces in Europe. This was the first time I had seen Douglas's famous train and I was greatly struck by its appearance. It seemed most comfortable and had a beautiful kitchen and splendid bathrooms.

On the 3rd of April we left Montreuil for Calais, going via Boulogne. We were shown over the ordnance workshops and lunched at the base-commandant's house. The following day we drove to Dieppe and had lunch with Colonel Pearson, the base-commandant there. There was an amusing old admiral at lunch who boasted about his own cook-

ing. He insisted on us calling at his little house so that he could make tea for us. When we got there we found that he had all sorts of contrivances to assist him with his cooking, but he certainly gave us a most enjoyable tea.

In Paris Douglas went straight to the Ministry of War to say good-bye to M. Clemenceau, who was making a wonderful recovery from the attack made upon him some weeks before. He met Douglas on the landing outside his room and looked fresh and fit, walking with a firm step. He was very profuse in his thanks to Douglas for all he had done for France in the war. He told Douglas that he was having a very difficult time but could not say all he would like to! Douglas sent for his son, who had served as a captain in a colonial division during the war, and pinned the Military Cross on his breast. Clemenceau was tremendously pleased at his son being decorated in this way—even more pleased, as Douglas said, than if he had pinned the decoration on the old man's own breast. After leaving the Ministry of War, Douglas went to M. Poincaré's apartments, where he was received with a guard of honour. In the course of his talk with Poincaré Douglas told him that in his opinion the most serious period of the whole war was probably in 1917, on account of the mutinies in the French army. The President seemed very surprised that Douglas should have known about the mutinies, but agreed that the situation at the time was certainly very serious. He paid great tribute to General Pétain for what he had done at that difficult period. As a matter of fact Pétain had come to Douglas in the summer of 1917 with the express purpose of telling him how grave the situation was as regards the lack of discipline in the French army, and to plead with him to use every effort to keep the enemy engaged till he could get his officers to regain command of the troops. He had pointed out that if the Germans were not kept fully engaged by the British troops there

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would be a great possibility of their attacking on the front held by the mutinous French troops, and of course that would mean one end, and one end only. The enemy would be able to break right through and the situation then would be disastrous.

Douglas dined with Pétain that night, who referred to his visit in the summer of 1917. He said that actually the state of the French army had been much worse then than he had dared to say.

The following day Douglas went on to Chaumont, where he was met by General Pershing and his staff. In his address to the troops that were drawn up, he thanked General Pershing and the American army, on behalf of the British army, for the help which they had rendered us and the other Allies in the war. He stressed the point that 1917 was a most critical period and the arrival of General Pershing and a few officers of his staff in the summer of that year had produced a most heartening effect both on ourselves and the French. He then presented decorations to some sixty or seventy American officers.

Douglas came straight on to Boulogne from Chaumont on the 5th of April, and we were waiting for him on the quay when he arrived. Everybody seemed to have congregated at Boulogne to say farewell to their commander-in-chief. There were bands and guards of honour and personal friends and nurses and British and French staff officers by the hundred. General Asser and General Ford were of course there to receive Douglas. They were now in charge of the British area west of the "Rhine Army" zone in Germany. Douglas inspected the guards of honour, both French and British, shook hands with all and everybody, said a few friendly words of thanks to the Mayor, and General Diebold, commanding the French troops, and then we all went aboard the *Princess Victoria*. We were given seats on the bridge, and looked down on the

piers and jetties, all crowded with our men waiting to cheer Douglas on his departure from France. It was a thrilling sight and I felt very, very proud of my husband. I think Douglas was proud too, but he could not help being a little sad. We both had lumps in our throat, so to speak, and we spoke very little. It was a glorious, bright, sunny day, and as the steamer moved slowly down the harbour the cheering was taken up from one point to another. Bands played and officers saluted. Right at the pier point four pipers of the Fife Yeomanry played as we passed them. It was indeed a marvellous send off, and everyone seemed to enter wholeheartedly into the cheers given for Douglas. Such was the departure of G.H.Q. and the commander-in-chief from the scenes of the Great War in France. There was no ceremony on landing beyond the presence on the pier of the admiral from Dover, and the G.O.C. and staff officers from Shorncliffe. At Victoria, however, there was a huge gathering. Thousands of people had collected outside the station, although there was no official ceremony, and it was very difficult for our car to make its way through the dense, cheering crowds. There were a great many photographers both at Victoria and at Eastcott when we arrived there. Douglas and I and our two girls were photographed, and after that we were left alone in peace—a united family, for a little time. Douglas wrote the last pages of his diary that night after the children had gone to bed. His last two sentences read: "Here ends the Diary of some of my daily doings during the Great War. It has at times been difficult to write it up, but I always managed to write something for Doris."





EASTCOTT—ARRIVAL HOME



## CHAPTER XI

### AT HOME

1919-1924

## CHAPTER XI

### AT HOME

A DAY or two after his return from France, Douglas was received by the King at Buckingham Palace, and they talked together for over an hour. Douglas spoke to the King of some of the difficulties he had had to contend with during the war and how Lloyd George had wanted to dismiss all the commanders, one after the other, even Douglas himself, only it had been impossible to find a suitable successor to him. During his interview with the King Douglas put forward his idea of a great united church. It had always been Douglas's ideal to see a great-minded Imperial Church which would embrace all our churches. He thought there would be difficulty in getting the Roman Catholics to join, but such a church would be the means of binding the Empire together. He always said that the war was a glorious opportunity missed for the formation of such a church. He urged that no time should be lost in getting to work and organising an Imperial body of control consisting of representatives of all denominations. He considered that an Imperial Church created to unite us all in the service of God would assuredly prevent the British Empire from sharing the fate of the great empires of the past that had disappeared because there was no church or religion to bind all together.

On the 15th of April 1919 Douglas took over command of the Home Forces and had his G.H.Q. in the Horse Guards. Sir William Robertson, from whom he took over, had had a lot of anxiety over labour trouble.

The first thing Douglas did was to discuss with his C.G.S. the methods of working the command and the office. He

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thought the hours both of the staff and the clerks were too long, and these were accordingly reduced to 9.30 A.M. to 6 P.M.

Three days later Sir William Robertson left London for Cologne, where he was to take over the command of the army of occupation from General Plumer. Douglas saw him off from Victoria.

On the 23rd of April we attended the memorial service for the artillery at St. Paul's. It was very impressive and was attended by the King and Queen Alexandra. After the service, as the King's procession was leaving, Queen Alexandra came across the aisle and shook Douglas warmly by the hand.

On Anzac Day the Prime Minister of Australia had arranged to hold a procession through London of Australian troops, and Douglas was in attendance on the Prince of Wales, who took the salute at Australia House. The streets were crowded, and when Douglas left in his car, some minutes after the Prince, he received a tremendous welcome from the onlookers. They crowded round him to such an extent that they nearly carried him and the car off together. Douglas was much touched by this spontaneous and hearty demonstration by civilians and soldiers alike.

Next day (Saturday) we motored in the afternoon to Windsor Castle, where we stayed till the Monday morning. At dinner Douglas sat on the Queen's right whilst I sat opposite on the King's left. On the Sunday Douglas and I had tea with Princess Alice and Lord Athlone in their house in the Norman Tower.

A few days after our return to London Douglas attended a meeting at Westminster City Hall, where a number of Lord-Lieutenants and commanders of territorial units were gathered together to discuss arrangements for restarting the Territorial Force. The meeting was presided over by Mr. Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for War. Everyone

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was very enthusiastic, and Douglas in his address urged that a territorial division should be the same in all respects as a regular division and that the cadet battalions should be affiliated with the territorial divisions to act as feeders. He also strongly recommended that the comradeship started in the army during the war should be maintained by territorial associations.

The same evening Douglas attended a dinner given to Mr. Daniels, the Secretary of the American Navy, at the House of Commons. Mr. Walter Long was in the chair. After Mr. Daniels had replied to the toast of his health proposed by Lord Curzon, Mr. Clem Edwards, a Welsh Member of Parliament, proposed Douglas's health. When Douglas rose to reply he received a tremendous reception. Everybody stood up and cheered him to the echo. In his speech he told them that the most critical stage of the war was in 1917 on account of the mutinous state of the French army, and that the arrival of General Pershing and his staff at that time had had a very heartening effect.

The following day we attended the cavalry memorial service at St. Paul's. Douglas received Their Majesties, the Prince of Wales and Queen Alexandra at the main entrance. It was a very impressive service and everything went off well.

On the 3rd of May about 12,000 Dominion troops carried out a triumphal march through the streets. Douglas was in attendance on the King, who took the salute from a pavilion in front of Buckingham Palace. The New Zealanders and Canadians looked splendid.

In the evening Douglas attended the annual banquet of the Royal Academy of Arts, where he replied for the Army. In his speech he urged employers to be more kindly in their treatment of men and officers seeking employment.

On the 7th of May we left London for Scotland, where Douglas received the freedom of Glasgow, Renfrew,

Dundee, Cupar, St. Andrews and Edinburgh, as well as a number of University honours. I have already given a description of these visits in *A Scottish Tour*, published by me in aid of the Poppy Factory in Edinburgh, which gives the speeches made by Douglas at the various functions, including his Rectorial Address at St. Andrews and an interesting address given to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Other Scottish towns that conferred their freedom on Douglas at later dates were Aberdeen, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Stirling.

We returned to London on the last day of May in time for the King's birthday, which was observed on the 3rd of June. Douglas, as commander-in-chief, was in attendance on His Majesty at the ceremony of the Trooping of the Colour. The King rode back at the head of the Guards, whilst Douglas followed at the rear of the column.

On the 12th of June Admiral Beatty and Douglas were both decorated with the Order of Merit by the King at Buckingham Palace. From there we all went straight to the Guildhall, where they were presented with the freedom of the City of London and received very beautiful swords of honour. They were both given a very enthusiastic welcome. In the evening Douglas was entertained to dinner by the 7th Hussars, where he met a host of old friends who had come to do him honour.

During the next few weeks Douglas had to go to many parts of England to receive freedoms and other honours. On the 24th of June he went to Oxford, where he received an LL.D. from the University as well as the freedom of the city. On the 4th of July he went to Chester, where he was presented with the freedom and made a member of the Chester City Guilds. From there he proceeded to Liverpool and then to Southport and on to Newcastle.

Wolverhampton, Bournemouth, Brighton, Bristol, Swansea, Bangor, Gosport, Canterbury, Manchester, Leicester, Leeds, Bradford, Hull and Kingston-on-Thames all did Douglas honour.

Of all the honours conferred on Douglas I think he prized most the illuminated address which was presented to him at the 20th anniversary dinner of the 17th Lancers Old Comrades. There were about 300 present at the function, and Douglas considered that no greater honour could be paid to an officer than for *all ranks* of his regiment to combine to give him, on their own initiative, something to mark their appreciation of his services.

On the 19th of July the great peace procession took place, but the day stands out in my memory as one of extreme anxiety. Douglas had been running a temperature for some days previously and should not have been out at all, but sheer determination enabled him to finish the march. I shall never forget the wonderful reception that he received, but he fainted on reaching the Royal stand and was ill for some weeks after.

In the beginning of September the threatened railway strike and the more serious threat of a *general* strike kept Douglas very busy. He had many conferences with all the commanders-in-chief of the various commands to discuss their plans for dealing with the situation. It was necessary to arrange for the complete guarding of certain railways so that the food supply of the nation would not be interfered with. The troops were also to help the police to guard petrol depots and other essential stores and to assist the Ministry of Food to organise a convoy system by supplying lorries and drivers. Douglas strongly advocated that the troops should be kept concealed as long as possible and should only appear when their help was actually required. As soon as the necessity for action was over they were to be withdrawn at once. Douglas insisted that the troops should be



properly armed and act as *soldiers* and not as an auxiliary police force.

At a meeting of the Protection Committee at the Home Office Douglas urged the formation of companies of special constables to relieve the military, and this was carried out a week later.

After the railwaymen had been on strike for about a week feelings were becoming more and more bitter and Douglas expected that there would be serious trouble. So far the supply arrangements had worked splendidly and, except for a slight shortage of coal, the situation from the Government's point of view was excellent. Fortunately, however, the day before the general strike was to begin the Prime Minister and some of his colleagues met the railwaymen and a settlement was reached, the men returning to work at once. Douglas was very relieved as he hated the idea of employing the troops against their own kith and kin. He considered that the army was there for the protection of the country against a foreign enemy.

Douglas was spending a lot of time on the amalgamation of funds for the disabled officers. Several organisations had sprung up since my interest was first roused during the war when there was none. He worked hard to impress on everyone the necessity of economy in working and of grouping the various societies together so as to prevent overlapping. He was also very anxious to arrange for all the secretariats to be housed in one office, and have each branch managed by a sub-committee with a central committee of control which should appeal for, receive and allot all funds to the several branches.

My youngest daughter was born on the 7th of October, and in later years she was to prove a great happiness to my husband. Like most fathers Douglas was always a little afraid of spoiling his son but did not hesitate to shower his affection on his daughters. I can see him still during the last few years



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of his life leading his small girl by the hand and with the utmost patience teaching her to play tennis. He was so anxious to do everything to help her grow up a *strong* girl both in body and mind. His fussing over her rather amused me because he never paid nearly so much attention to his son, although he too was a very great joy to Douglas. He did not know then that the boy was destined to be so ill very soon after his death. But even in my sorrow I derived comfort, for I saw that Douglas's own unselfish nature and thoughtfulness for me were already apparent in our son, and I was very touched by the little boy of ten offering to help me to reply to the many letters I received after Douglas passed away. The letters he wrote are still kept by many of those who received them, and amongst those is John Buchan, now Lord Tweedsmuir.

After my little daughter's birth, Douglas, busy as he was, always found time to come and see me every day and tell me of his doings. On the day my baby was born he attended the presentation ceremony when Lord Allenby received the freedom of London, and at the Mansion House was given the task of proposing the health of the Lord Mayor and his lady. He told me he felt very nervous speaking after such a practised orator as Mr. Winston Churchill, who had followed the Lord Mayor in proposing Lord Allenby's health. Douglas, however, dwelt in his speech on what Lord Allenby had accomplished from the soldier's point of view, and so did not have much difficulty in finding the right words to express himself.

On Trafalgar Day Douglas attended the service in St. Martins-in-the-Fields, and in the evening he was the only guest at the dinner of the Royal Naval Club of 1765 and 1785.

About this time Douglas was invited to give his views before Lord Esher's committee as to the future of the Army, and he urged the necessity of appointing someone to control the administration services who would be on the same

footing as the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. As commander-in-chief of the home forces Douglas had realised the lack of this controlling head. He suggested also that the scope of the Imperial General Staff should be greatly developed, and reminded Mr. Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for War, of Lord Haldane's recommendations at the Imperial Conference in 1907.

At the end of October Douglas met the King of Spain, who lunched at Eastcott a few days later. The luncheon was a purely private affair and was very simple.

It was during this period that Sir James Guthrie painted Douglas's portrait, and I was very amused that the artist chose an old greenish mackintosh, one which I had at one time hurriedly sent out to France, for Douglas to wear. Guthrie and Douglas struck up a very warm friendship.

We attended the memorial service for the London Scottish on the 2nd of November at St. Columba's Church. Douglas was the honorary colonel of the regiment and he read the lessons. It is interesting that he wrote of this service, "Of all the memorial services I have attended this year this was the most touching and genuine in my opinion".

When Douglas was free he played quite a lot of golf, mostly with me and often with our two eldest daughters, whom he took a great delight in teaching. Coombe Hill Golf Course was quite close and there was also a little course just outside our gate.

He spent a lot of time putting together all his maps of the war, and they were hung up in a small hut in the garden. They made a very wonderful show and he loved showing them to his friends. Many of those who had served on his staff during the war came to see him at Eastcott.

In January 1920 Douglas relinquished the appointment of commander-in-chief of the home forces. He was created an earl at the end of 1919, and Parliament voted him a grant of £100,000.

We stayed on at Eastcott till we learned that Bemersyde was to be presented to him, but it was some time before we could get into our new home. We first went to Brighton, where we stayed for six months, and then came to Edinburgh. It was not until March 1924 that we eventually took up residence at Bemersyde.

Before we left Eastcott, Douglas was a good deal away. He had many journeys to make for the British Legion, and he was asked to unveil a great number of war memorials. There were also still many towns which desired to honour him and to which he went to receive their freedom. He led, however, on the whole, a quiet homely life, and we went little to London. Douglas shunned publicity, and would only attend functions when he was obliged to. Practically all his time was devoted to the work of the British Legion and the formation of the British Empire Service League, and those who were helping him in this work were frequent visitors.

This chapter would not be complete without something being told about the beginnings of the British Legion, the foundation of which was the task that Douglas set himself after his active military work was over. In its conception Douglas saw the continuance of that wonderful comradeship born in the trenches, and the inspiration of service to each other which had carried his men through the terrible happenings of the war. It was, however, really the men themselves who began the British Legion. Whilst the fighting was still going on, the *Federation, Comrades of the War* and other similar organisations were formed, and Douglas realised then that one united comradeship could achieve much more than several separate bodies. He had already had from me reports of meetings which I had attended with Sir Ian Hamilton with a view to possible amalgamation of these associations, but our efforts had little success. Douglas was very anxious about the pensions allotted to the disabled

men and was also conscious of the difficulties that his men would experience in finding employment, especially in the case of the many young boys who had joined up straight from school and had thereby missed the training necessary for a career. He therefore encouraged them to attend the training classes which the Government had inaugurated for officers and men at the front. He came home with a fixed determination to live out his remaining years in the service of the brave men who had saved their country. At first, however, the members of the already formed associations did not welcome the idea of being merged into one organisation and it was not until early in 1921 that they came together. Douglas first of all decided to start with the amalgamation of all the officers' organisations, and the *Officers' Association* was formed. He made an appeal on this account at the Mansion House at the end of January 1920, and stressed that, at that moment, unanimity was essential but could not be secured among all the existing societies as it had been among ex-officers' organisations. Although the *Officers' Association* was then dealing with cases of ex-officers only, it was not intended to limit its activities wholly to the one side of the problem. As their means accumulated and their organisation improved, it was the intention to lend a helping hand to the men as well. Douglas finished his appeal by saying: "I ask you to help me in a task which should be a sacred one to every fit man and woman in these islands. . . . It is my opinion that we owe it to these men that we are not to-day the poor despoiled vassals of a foreign state. But for the unselfish bravery of those for whom I plead, our mighty Empire would have crumbled, and this great city and all the wealth and grandeur in it would have suffered the fate that overtook great imperial cities in the past." His appeal met with a most generous response.

Douglas also addressed, at Leicester, a meeting of the *Federation*, who had expressed to him their wish to join up







into one formation, and at the dinner with them he thanked them for giving him such a welcome, which he said could not fail to gladden the heart of a commander. He explained that, although he could not claim to have shared in all their sufferings and hardships, he had shared to the full in their anxieties and endeavours, and that ever since his return from France, and indeed from many months before that date, he had looked forward to the day when all those gallant fellows, whatever their service or rank, who served together as Comrades in the Great War and lived to come through it, would acknowledge the ties of their old comradeship by coming together to form one single and united ex-service organisation. He told them that by having decided to unite in one single organisation they were realising an object for which he had worked earnestly and steadfastly. It was not Douglas's intention to imply that any of the original ex-service organisations were in danger of upsetting the cause of ex-service men, for he knew that they had done a great deal of very useful and very necessary work, and had done it remarkably well. He believed, however, that acting together as one organisation, or as a united body of organisations under a single executive, they would be able to achieve even more useful work, and make more rapid progress. The administrative ability and remarkable organising power and the wonderful network of organisation that had been built up all over the country by the various organisations proved that the sense of comradeship was a real thing. Despite the goodwill of the nation at large and all the work that had been done by organisations like the Federation and the Comrades and by individuals, there were still, two years after the armistice, something like a quarter of a million ex-service men and women unprovided for. The four million men who had returned from our armies had not been able to make their influence felt sufficiently to find places for their unemployed comrades. Douglas pointed out

that this was because there was no single responsible body holding the reins; there was neither common policy nor common action. Despite their wonderful organisation, the energies of the early separate associations of ex-service men were largely wasted one against the other. There was competition between them, where there should have been co-operation, and Douglas was convinced that the amalgamation of the different organisations into one, with a single executive body, would draw all ex-service men and women of all ranks closer together and make the old comradeship a yet more real and living thing. The purpose of the proposed united organisation was to perpetuate in the civil life of the Empire and of the world the principles for which we had fought; to teach and practise loyalty to the community and unity among classes; to make right the master of might; to secure peace and goodwill on earth. It was also intended that there should be maintained a democratic comradeship among all who had served in whatever rank or capacity, so that neither the efforts nor the interests of any member of that great comradeship would be forgotten. Douglas considered that the first thing to do was to look after the less fortunate, to help those who were sick, disabled or fatherless, and to see that employment was found for those who were out of work. The organisation was to be definitely democratic and not political. He believed that four million men and women, united and speaking with one voice, and each of them influencing the voices of others around them, could make their voice heard. The Government, employers and trade unions had been approached and had all shown an interest and a sympathy which Douglas was ready to acknowledge and acknowledge gratefully, but there were still a quarter of a million ex-service men without work. Douglas firmly believed that in order to be satisfied and happy a man must be able to take pride in his work and put his whole energy, heart and soul into it; he must be

able to feel that his particular work is a necessary and worthy part of the work of the whole community to which he belongs; that his work is worth while, whatever it may be, and that by doing it, to the best of his ability, he is not only doing his best for his own private interests, but is also doing his duty to his fellows. He was convinced that if the ex-service men set about the task in unison they could confer a benefit on the country as great as that which they had already given it.

Many were the appeals that my husband made, and the gradual development of the British Legion was the result. I have tried to give the first ideals that prompted Douglas to continue the work to which he had set his hand. He always felt that every man and woman who had served in any capacity whatsoever during the war should come into the British Legion, and he hoped that the standard would be carried on by their children. Douglas was so patient through the many disappointments and difficulties that he encountered. I know that his great sorrow was that more did not come into the organisation, and the continued suffering amongst his comrades, chiefly due to unemployment, almost broke his heart during the last years of his life. But with his broad outlook he knew that these difficulties must be gone through and were there to be overcome. He would gladly have shouldered the burden and borne the sufferings of those who were in such necessity through lack of work.



CHAPTER XII  
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## CHAPTER XII

### SOUTH AFRICAN TOUR

THE object of our tour to South Africa was the inauguration of the British Empire Service League. This was very necessary so that an Imperial addition might be made to the British Legion. At that time in the colonies ex-service men were split up into different organisations, and were not working in unity, just as had happened at home during and directly after the war. I am glad to say that my husband's appeal had the hoped-for result and the British Empire Service League was started in South Africa after his visit.

We left England on the Union-Castle s.s. *Edinburgh Castle* and were accompanied by delegates of the British Legion. We enjoyed the voyage very much. Douglas and I, however, were very busy preparing his speeches and putting together the various maps of the battlefields where he had fought during the South African War. He knew that it had been arranged for him to go to the battlefields with some of the South Africans who had fought against him in that campaign. I was kept very fully employed because I was acting as Douglas's secretary and was doing all his typing for him and so we did not have as much leisure as we should have liked. The captain of the ship, however, could not have been kinder. He was very proficient at deck quoits and we had many friendly matches with him. Our cabins, of course, were most comfortable and we were treated like royalty.

Just before we landed, Douglas was suddenly told that the Mayor of Cape Town wanted to speak to him on the telephone. Incidentally this was the first time that the tele-

phone had been used at sea. Curiously enough I spoke better on the telephone than Douglas, so he insisted that I should go below and receive the message. It turned out that the Mayor wished Douglas to appear in uniform. He said it would be much more effective and greatly appreciated by those who saw him and I was asked to persuade my husband to accede to the request. As I knew Douglas intended to wear uniform it was easy for me to give a satisfactory reply. We received a delightful message of welcome by wireless from Colonel Mentz, Minister of Defence: 'welcome you most heartily to South Africa and will do my best to make your visit a pleasant one'. We also had radiograms from General van Deventer and from General Smuts. The latter's message read: "I arrived from Bushville last night and learned of your safe arrival and great reception at Cape Town. Allow me also to bid you and Lady Haig most hearty welcome to South Africa. I trust you will have a good time and not only do useful work in connection with your mission but also derive health and happiness from contact with the old familiar friends and places."

On our arrival at Cape Town on 20th February 1921, we were received by the Mayor and Mayoress and Admiral Sir William Goodenough, Commander-in-Chief, African Station. General Sir Henry Lukin was also there to meet us.

Whilst in Cape Town Douglas met Major P. Van der Byl and chose him as A.D.C. The matter was referred to General Smuts, who agreed to the appointment, and so was put in charge of our arrangements and accompanied us on the tour.

Crowds lined the streets and it was not long before Douglas had to begin making his first speech. He felt very much at home in South Africa, having been there so long during the South African War, and when he stayed on after the war he had made many friends.



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The conference started on the day after our arrival and a luncheon was given to us by the Mayor.

We attended a large banquet of the citizens of Cape Town and I do not think I shall ever forget the wonderful sight of the fruit on the tables used as decorations instead of flowers. It had all been supplied from the garden of Mr. De Villiers, next to whom I sat.

During our stay in Cape Town Douglas unveiled the Gardens Presbyterian Church War Memorial.

After the conference was over we started on a short sight-seeing tour, going first to George, where we stayed in a delightful little house belonging to a blind officer called Crawford. Mr. and Mrs. Vincent had arranged this for us. They had been very very good to blind officers in South Africa. From there we motored down the beautiful Montague Pass to Oudtshoorn and through the Schwarberg Pass, picking up our special coach, which had been sent round by Worcester for us, at Prince Albert Road. We proceeded to Kimberley by rail, arriving on the 14th of March. There we were the guests of the Mayor, Mr. Lawrence, and stayed at the De Beers Private Hotel. I was presented with two beautiful uncut diamonds, to be made later into earrings. The authorities had been obliged to give up making these presentations but a special exception was made in my case. Having received the stones I naturally proceeded to take them away with me but was informed that if I was found with the uncut stones in my possession I might be imprisoned for I.D.B., so I had to hand them back to be cut. That night at dinner one of the Australian delegates told us that when the Prince of Wales went to Australia he received a wonderful welcome and was positively mobbed and had even the cuff-links taken from his dress shirt as souvenirs. In the same breath as he told us of this incident, our Australian friend invited Douglas and myself to visit his country and we would be assured of an equally warm reception. I

thanked him warmly for his invitation and said we hoped we would be able to go to Australia, but in view of what he had told us I would make a point of going without my diamonds! This caused roars of laughter and the unfortunate Australian had his leg unmercifully pulled for the rest of the trip.

From Kimberley we visited the battlefields of Klipdrift, and my husband found the exact spot where he had stood with General French when the latter ordered the final cavalry advance which ended in the relief of Kimberley. We had a good deal of trouble with our cars—one entirely refusing to move—and matters began to look serious. Several of the cars were bogged and people started to get fussed, but Douglas showed his usual calmness in dealing with a difficult situation. In a very unperturbed way he said, "Now, ladies and gentlemen, just let everybody keep quite calm and leave everything as it is. We shall all get out and have lunch and then we shall find that both man and car will feel rested a little, and everything will solve itself." So we had our picnic, and, sure enough, when we went back to the cars they all proceeded through the mud as if nothing had happened. This made a great impression on everyone present.

From Kimberley we went to Barkly West, and there a heartfelt reception was given Douglas. The Mayor tried to play an amusing little trick on me but I was too observant for it to be a success. The diamonds at Barkly West are brought up out of the river by means of a machine like a small dredger with a bucket which goes right to the bottom of the river and scoops up the diamonds! Of course the bucket comes up oftener without diamonds than with them. However, when my friend brought the bucket up there was a gasp of astonishment, for lo and behold, there was a diamond in the bucket! Unfortunately I had seen the gem drop into the bucket out of his cuff, and I am afraid I was

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much too candid for I told him that I had seen him drop the diamond. It was, nevertheless, a very beautiful stone and I prized it very much.

We next visited Johannesburg, where we stayed with Sir Lionel and Lady Phillips, who could not have been kinder or more hospitable. There were many luncheons and dinners given in our honour while we were there.

I had been led to believe that during our visit we should encounter hot or mild weather, and so I had not brought many clothes suitable for cold weather. Whilst at Johannesburg a large garden-party was being held in our honour and the weather turned very cold and wet on the morning of the function, with the result that my summery frocks were of no use at all. The A.D.C. was therefore sent post-haste to remedy the matter. He created somewhat of a sensation in a very fashionable dress shop by demanding to see the manageress, and, pointing to one of the assistants, informed her that he wanted three garden-party frocks to fit a lady about that size, as well as a dressmaker and a machine. The whole lot were bundled into a car and brought up to Lady Phillips's house, where I chose my frock, had the necessary alterations made and wore it that afternoon. Major Van der Byl, the A.D.C., tells me that he still feels "hot round the collar" when he thinks of this incident.

Pretoria was the next place we went to, and there we received the same enthusiastic welcome. Douglas and I had a slight disagreement at this point of the trip—a *very* slight disagreement it was. Douglas had been invited by Sir Abe Bailey to stay at his farm at Grootfontein, and we were both to hunt the springbok. I was terrified at the suggestion because I had not ridden for a long time, and I was told that this kind of hunting entailed galloping to the spot, driving the springbok in front of one, jumping off and shooting it with a rifle, and I had never used a rifle before. So I got our hostess to arrange for me to go to the Victoria Falls whilst

Douglas was on the farm. He was rather annoyed at first, but with his usual understanding he let me go.

I travelled with Sir Drummond Chaplin, who allowed me to use one of the compartments in his train, and the journey was therefore made much easier, for it was a long trail to the Victoria Falls. Everyone knows how beautiful the falls are, but I think I have never seen anything more lovely. Although the falls were at their fullest I was fortunate in being able to get some beautiful views of them. I also visited Rhodes's grave, an enchanting spot overlooking the whole country with the rocks all round making it so rugged—almost typical of Rhodes himself.

Douglas had made me promise that I would join him at the farm on the day before he left. I arrived in the early hours of the morning and found that husband of mine on the station platform to meet me. He rather horrified me by telling me that Sir Abe Bailey had kept the best hunt for me and that we were going that afternoon. As I have already explained, I was afraid of the expedition and, besides, my habit was at the bottom of my box. However, I wanted to do what Douglas wished and so I got out my habit, but the thought of the rifle rather worried me. Would I not be a danger? Sir Abe was away so I got hold of his son, who agreed with me that my not having touched a rifle before was certainly a great danger. We rigged up a target therefore and out we went for an hour's practice, after which he seemed quite satisfied with the result. I bargained with him to have the springbok driven instead of us having to gallop after them, and the boy promised to make all the arrangements. I rode side-saddle because I never could ride astride, but I left off my habit skirt and wore some jodhpurs which I happened to have with me.

The exciting moment arrived. The springbok appeared in the distance, and somehow I *felt* I could shoot one. So standing, not I admit in the correct position as I had been

## THE MAN I KNEW

A.D.C. informed me that a squadron of a hundred lady's-maids would be drawn up on the station platform and would present *flat-irons* the moment I stepped off the train!

At Bloemfontein Douglas unveiled the War Memorial, and at Harrismith we passed the Duke of Westminster's estate, where we were met by Commodore Ponsonby, who after making a most amusing speech presented Douglas with a walking-stick. We passed Ladysmith in the train and were shown various points of great interest. I think the most interesting was Spion Kop. Seeing it one realised how little chance those poor men who attempted to hold the hill had of survival.

After visiting Pictmaritzburg we arrived at Durban, and I think the reception there was greater than any we had yet received. At one ceremony Douglas was presented with a beautiful sword, which I have now in the museum at Bemer-syde, and I was given a very exquisite fan of ostrich feathers. During our visit to Durban we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. James.

From Durban we went to East London and I shall never forget our going ashore in the tug—it was *so* rough. Douglas and I were very good sailors, but some of the other members of the party were not. An official reception was held and by the time that was over they were absolutely *hors de combat*.

We next went to Port Elizabeth, and on our way back we stayed with General Smuts and his wife at their house, which was built by Rhodes. Douglas had stayed there during the South African War with Rhodes himself. Mrs. Smuts was a most delightful woman and so different from the ordinary person—she was so natural. Both she and General Smuts lived the life of Dutch folk and did not like the ceremonies that their position entailed. When the General was first made Prime Minister, his wife was approached by some friends who suggested that her position demanded that she

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pay more attention to her clothes. So they took her to a shop to help her to buy a new dress and outfit. She bought whatever they suggested and arrived to greet her husband all dressed up in her new clothes, but his only remark was, "Jeannie, take them off. I like you best as you are." So she always kept to her own natural ways of doing things. She was a very clever woman and passed all sorts of university examinations, but to me she could not have been kinder. We loved our stay there and greatly envied General and Mrs. Smuts their beautiful garden, in which they took such an interest.

So ended our South African tour. Sir Abe Bailey gave us a farewell lunch and the whole of the inhabitants of Cape Town came to see us off when we left on the 29th of April.

During our tour Douglas received several addresses from native chiefs, and I should like to quote from one of these.

To His Lordship, Field Marshal Earl Haig.

GREAT CHIEF, ILLUSTRIOUS CAPTAIN, NOBLE EARL!

When I look upon you, great Chief, I realise that I have been well named Jongintaba, that is to say, in your own speech, "The Mountain Gazer", for when I regard you I behold in you one who, in loyalty and faith to his Sovereign, in even-handed justice and merciful sympathy to the soldier of his command, whether a Prince of the Blood or a private in the ranks, or a humble member of the South African Native Labour Corps, of which I was one, in courage, in steadfastness and in patience in the day of adversity, in wisdom and in prudence in the day of battle, and in modesty in the hour of victory, towers above his fellow subjects of His Most Gracious Majesty the King, as the mountains of my beautiful country tower above the foot-hills around their base.

May you be of a prosperous journey. May the ocean, too,

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be calm for you. May all things be well on your arrival at home.

It is I, your servant David Jongintaba, Son of Dalindyebo, Giver of Wealth, Son of Ngangelizwe, Great as the World, Son of Mtirara, Herb of Bitterness, Son of Ngubengcuka, the Wolf Robe, who was saved from the spears of the Mfecane, the Destroyers, by Victoria, the Great Queen of Many Nations, Mother of Edward the Maker of Peace, Father of George the Victorious, your Illustrious and Glorious Sovereign and mine,

It is I,

Your child,

(Sgd.) DAVID JONGINTABA DALINDYEBO

Douglas's reply to this beautiful and picturesque address was as follows:

I have received your greetings with pleasure, and thank you most sincerely for them.

You, O Chief, who rule the Amatuli Tribe wisely and well, do right in assuring their constant loyalty and obedience to Our Great King, and to the Magistrates he appoints. Continue so and you are assured of his constant favour and protection.

And Haig of Bemersyde, who writes you this message, will be your friend, and when I am again in the presence of His Majesty I will tell him of the dutiful greetings you have brought, and how you have presented me with a rod, a symbol of authority and power.

Chief, may you and your people remain prosperous and happy.

(Sgd.) HAIG

of Bemersyde,

F.M.

Another letter which is rather interesting was from a Mr. Domleo, who made no attempt to see my husband or

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to exploit his loss or sorrows. All he did was to hand to the Guard the following letter.

To Earl and Countess Haig.

HAIL! BRAVE AND NOBLE SOLDIER

In the name of my son, Private STEPHEN HAROLD DOMLEO, 1st S.A.I., who at 16 fought at Cambrai and at 17 fell at Messines, April 11th, 1918.

Up this kloof on the farm he left flies the old Flag, not "half mast" but "right up" where you and he helped to put it.

Douglas replied to this letter thus:

Mr. Domleo,  
Sotaeamund,  
Winter's Kloof,  
Nr. P. Maritzburg.

DEAR MR. DOMLEO,

I should like to thank you for your letter of greeting to Lady Haig and myself, and to say how sorry we both are not to have met you.

Your letter is one of intense pride in your son: the manner of his living and the nature of his death; but I feel that could he but see the letter he would be as proud of his father as his father is of him.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sgd.) HAIG,  
F.M.

I cannot leave this chapter on South Africa without expressing my heartfelt thanks to Major Piet Van der Byl. Not only was he my husband's A.D.C. and my staunch friend during the tour, but I am deeply indebted for his valuable help in recalling incidents for this chapter and keeping me right as to sequence and facts.





## CHAPTER XIII

### CANADA

1925



## CHAPTER XIII

### CANADA

#### *British Empire Service League*

the 19th of June 1925 we sailed aboard the R.M.S. *tia* for Canada. Captain Taylor and his crew could do enough for us. The weather was glorious and together the crossing was delightful. Officials of the League and representatives of the British Legion travelled with us, and included in the party were delegates from all parts of the world. We were certainly a happy crowd and usual ship's games were indulged in. We also celebrated Prince of Wales's birthday by a children's tea-party which was great fun.

We arrived at Quebec on June 26th, and were received by the Mayor, Joseph Samson, who delivered a charming address of welcome in French. Douglas replied both in French and English, which pleased the crowds very much. We dined as the guests of the Garrison Club, and left for Montreal in the early hours of the morning.

It had been arranged that the official welcome at Montreal would be made on our way home, and as Douglas was not very well and in the doctor's hands, I persuaded him to stay quietly on board ship. Meanwhile I went ashore with Sir Henry Thornton, President of the Canadian National Railways, who drove me round the town and introduced me to some rather powerful cocktails at his beautiful home, which we visited.

In the evening Douglas was to have presided at a dinner given by the British Empire Service League at the Ritz

Carlton Hotel to Captain Taylor of the *Letitia* (who was our guest of honour), Sir Henry Thornton, General Armstrong (commanding Quebec district) and Mrs. Armstrong, Mr. Dalrymple (assistant manager C.N.R.) and Mrs. Dalrymple, and Colonel Gear (representative of Cunard Line at Montreal) and Mrs. Gear. Douglas not being well enough to attend, I was put in his place at the function. Everyone was so kind and made my job very easy for me. We had, however, great difficulty in persuading Captain Taylor to make a speech, but when he at last got up he made a capital one. Sir Henry Thornton and General Armstrong also spoke. After the dinner we had a splendid dance which lasted till 2.30 A.M. This was perhaps foolish for we were leaving early next morning by train for Ottawa.

We were received there on our arrival by Mr. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister, supported by Mr. Macdonald, Minister of Defence, Mr. O'Connor, Minister of Justice, and Mr. Balharrie, the Mayor. The tremendously enthusiastic welcome which we were given at Parliament Buildings was rather marred by news we received about our son Dawyck. He had just had an operation for appendicitis but the cablegram gave us no details. However, a second message assured us that the operation had been satisfactory, but we were naturally both upset and would have liked to know if it were of a simple or complicated nature.

We dined that night with General MacBrian and his young wife, and we danced after dinner. Douglas had quite recovered now and he too joined in the dancing.

The following day we attended the opening of the conference in the Parliament Buildings, and conference meetings occupied a lot of time during the next four days. Luncheons, dinners and tea-parties were arranged, however, by all sorts of societies and individuals for our entertainment, and we were introduced to all present at these func-

ons. Everyone was very kind and spared no effort to make our trip gay and interesting. General MacBrian arranged for me to fly over the town and Major Shearer acted as my pilot. On Dominion Day (July 1st) we attended the Regatta at Brighton Beach and also a garden-party given by the Prime Minister. We greatly admired Mr. Mackenzie King's beautiful house, which was full of fine old furniture. His tremendous devotion to his mother reminded me very much of Douglas's to his. He had a great many pictures of her about the house and he had never married on account of his devotion to her. She had died only two years before our visit.

From Ottawa we travelled west in the carriage called 'Killarney', which was used by the Prince of Wales, and owned by Lord Shaughnessy. We stopped at various places on the route, where we were always met with great enthusiasm in the way of welcome by Girl Guides, Boy Scouts and Veterans—all turned out to greet Douglas.

At Kenora we stayed a couple of days as the guests of Mr. Bob Rogers at his fishing camp. He had a quaint log-house but most comfortable, and from it one could get lovely views of the lake. We fished from small rowing-boats and canoes with every conceivable description of bait and very light rods. Douglas of course was taken to the best places and so caught most fish, but I did quite well, landing the second-best basket on the second day's fishing. The mosquitoes were very troublesome, however, and we were all badly bitten. There were gay dinner-parties each night and lots of dancing.

In Winnipeg we stayed at Government House with Sir James and Lady Aikins, who were exceedingly kind. I was amused, however, when Douglas was taken mysteriously to Sir James's writing-room, where some whisky was produced, and they both drank a peg. A further supply was secretly sent up to Douglas's room; but I was never allowed

anything other than orangeade, and during the whole of our visit this was the only drink served at meals.

At Calgary we rode to the Stampede. This was the fiftieth anniversary of Calgary, and so the show was specially good and we found it most interesting. I went off to the Indian camp and found a nice old chief and his wife, who were in bed. Considerable interest and amusement were caused because I insisted on bringing the Chief along to the stand to introduce him to my husband. The cameras became extraordinarily busy!

It was in Calgary that the Mayor procured a riding habit for me and I rode with the others through the streets. I rode astride on a stock saddle and we went amongst the cowboys and ate flapjacks and drank coffee at various stalls. I must say I found the stock saddle very comfortable. The Indians were all turned out in their full dress with their wives and children too. It was a grand sight and Douglas was made Bull Head Chief. The ceremony of his being created chief was most interesting, although he seemed to be a little self-conscious and a trifle worried as he was being put into the strange and gaudy clothes and having the many feathered and highly decorative head-dress properly adjusted. However, everyone really enjoyed themselves thoroughly if one can judge by the enthusiasm with which Douglas was acclaimed Bull Head Chief.

We saw a team of forty-two horses driven by one man, who gave a wonderful exhibition of driving round corners. The riding of wild horses and lassoing of wild cows was also an interesting sight.

We were met at Banff by Lord Byng. There had been a good deal of comment about his not being at Ottawa to receive Douglas.

At Victoria, B.C., we visited the Buchards' garden. This was a truly wonderful sight. Mrs. Buchard was an interesting woman, unpretentious, but with a flair for colour in

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a garden. There were wonderful masses of colour and we spent a long time admiring the beauties of the garden.

Everywhere we went we were entertained to functions of all kinds and Douglas and I were for ever making speeches. In Vancouver we were never advised of the various functions until the last moment, with the result that we never knew what we were expected to do. Most of our speeches, therefore, were quite unprepared, but Douglas was beginning to find it much easier to speak extempore with only a few notes put down immediately before he rose. Amongst a host of other things we did we opened a golf course, where we both drove off—one after the other.

From Vancouver we crossed to Victoria, and on the boat Douglas caused much amusement by the delight he took in the dancing on board. I realised that my husband could not really enjoy any relaxation during our tour in Canada unless he learned to dance, for in Canada the fathers, mothers, and even grandfathers, and the children dance together, and old people are not looked down upon for taking the floor. So I gave him, privately, a lesson or two, and he got on quite well, though I own that sometimes my shoes suffered a little bit during our practising. On crossing to Victoria, Douglas had been dancing quite strenuously, but the ship's hostess (on American boats there is always a lady there to introduce partners to each other) had brought to him only elderly ladies. Noticing this, I approached the lady and suggested that he might prefer less important but younger partners. Some of the delegates overheard my request and smiled, but they smiled far more when my husband while he was dancing a "Paul Jones" seized the prettiest girl on the boat and hung on to her for the rest of the dance, refusing to give her up.

We passed through some wonderful scenery on our way to Jasper Park, where we stayed at the National Railway

Hotel. This hotel consisted of curious little log huts with a large one where we fed and danced. Here we took part in a large trail party, where all the ladies were picturesquely dressed. In these parties they learn to ride trails and get medals for so many miles. We rode with them and Douglas opened trail camp. We were both given bronze medals for the mileage we had done and were made members of the Trail Riders. We visited Mount Edith Cavell Glacier, I attired in an Indian chieftain's dress because of the intense cold and the fact that it was easier to climb in trousers.

At Edmonton we saw all over Lord Rodney's farm. Lady Rodney was marvellous. She looked so dainty, and yet when she could not get help she did all the work herself of milking thirty-six cows, bottling the milk, making butter, washing clothes, cooking, housework—in fact everything. At one time she had pupils on the farm to look after as well, but when we were there she had organised a separate house and installed a lady to look after them. The nephew of the late King of the Belgians—the Duc de Nemours—was one of their pupils at the time. How we wished that Dawyck could have been brought up there and that the girls could have had the experience of that simple farm life.

From Toronto I had the delightful experience of flying over Niagara Falls. Major Shearer again acted as my pilot, and although the weather was very misty and wet at first (indeed had I not used all my persuasiveness, Major Shearer would have hardly risked taking off), it cleared up beautifully just as we got to the falls and we had a splendid view with the sun shining brightly on the water. This was the first flight over the falls and we had to fly rather high as the effect of the currents on the machine had not yet been ascertained.

The official reception at Montreal more or less completed our Canadian tour. While we remained there we stayed with Sir Henry Thornton. More luncheons and gay



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dinner-parties with dances following were the order of things and we embarked again on the *Letitia* on July 31st.

We had travelled right across Canada from east to west and back again; had met the people and had stayed amongst them for a little over a month. There is no doubt that Douglas had done an immense amount of good. Everyone had been so really pleased to see him. What struck him most was probably the immensity of the country and the fact that the people still stuck to that delightful communal life. There were many times when he felt that it would be a blessing if the people of the mother country could only be as natural to each other as were the Canadians.

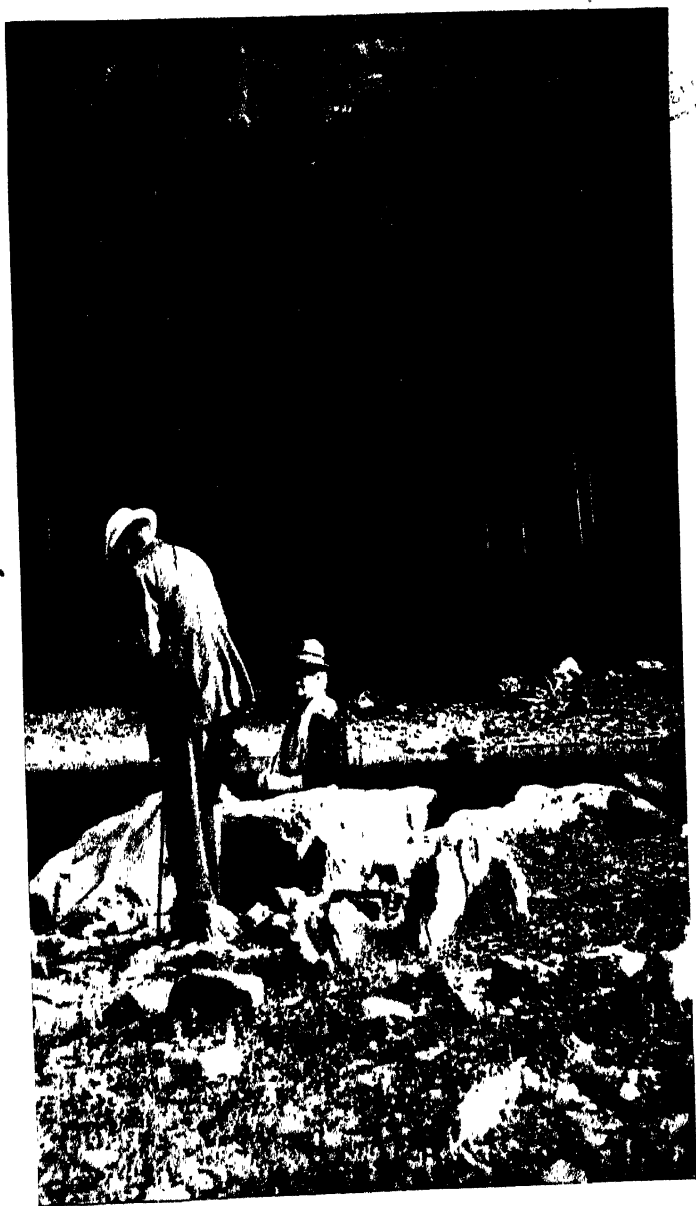




BEMERSYDE

## CHAPTER XIV

### BEMERSYDE



ON THE TWEED AT BEMERSYDE  
Douglas and Henrietta, 1927



## CHAPTER XIV

### BEMERSYDE

ON the 15th of March 1924, our son's sixth birthday, we arrived at Bemersyde. The reason for the very long delay in our taking up residence there was due to the fact that so much had to be done to the house. I do not expect that it is generally known that Douglas had to spend about £40,000 on the house to put it in a satisfactory state. It has very frequently been said that Bemersyde was a *national gift*, but this is not the case. It was a gift from his countrymen. My husband had long wanted to possess the old house which had belonged to the Haig family for so many generations. In fact he had cherished the idea of living there ever since he paid a visit to the house as a small boy, and its presentation to him was a very real happiness. No doubt it must have caused him considerable anxiety having to spend such a large sum of money on the building, almost half the grant voted him by Parliament, but he could not bear to think of the place going to ruin, and it gave him a great deal of pleasure to get the house he loved so much into such good order. It was necessary to put in iron supports to hold up the old peel tower, and all the wooden floors had to be renewed as worms had got right through the house and had destroyed a great deal of the furniture as well. He built a special study at the top of the peel tower where before there were only small cells without windows, used many years ago as servants' bedrooms. It is this room and his bedroom beneath it, also in the peel tower, that I have turned into a museum.

In May, a few months after we took up our residence at

Bemersyde, Douglas unveiled the Guards' Memorial at Zandvoorde and I accompanied him. We paid a second visit to the battlefields while we were there, and met the late King of the Belgians at Messines, where the latter was unveiling the memorial to the London Scottish. It was interesting revisiting the places where we had been five years earlier, and a great deal of reconstruction work had been accomplished. Lens especially attracted our attention as it had been quite built up again, whilst Albert showed little signs of rebuilding.

The many British cemeteries which we passed with their Cross of Sacrifice and Stone of Remembrance were a sad and constant reminder of the brave men who had laid down their lives for their country. Many of the wooden crosses were still standing, but were being gradually replaced by headstones.

During the days that he spent at Bemersyde Douglas was very, very happy. He enjoyed making his garden, and he fished, shot and hunted. He used to take a special delight in playing tennis with the younger children, and was so patient with them as he taught them how to serve. He would spend more than an hour every day showing them how to play the different strokes. He caught many fine salmon in Tweed, but I think he was proudest of all when I, *who could not fish*, caught the biggest salmon of the year from that river. The achievement was duly recorded in the *Scotsman*, and is the last entry in my husband's fishing book.

In the study Douglas and I worked together daily, putting together his diaries which he had written for me during the war. I had typed them all each day as I had received them, but I retyped them with him and he inserted into their appropriate places all the interesting letters and documents which he had sent to me for safe keeping. The arranging of these papers was a great godsend to him because it bridged over the difficult days when his work for the British army was at an end.





IRENE AND DAWYCK AT BEMERSYDE

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Douglas never failed to remember the difficulties that his officers and men were having to contend with, and he was always ready to do what he could to help them. He never missed an opportunity of appealing for his comrades and urging employers to help him to find them work. "They do not ask for charity; they want work", he would say. In his speeches made in reply to the honours that were conferred upon him he invariably used these words: "In honouring me, you are honouring my brave men who won the war".

Right up to the time of his death my husband realised so much what the misery of unemployment meant to his men, and he found that it was even more difficult to get work for his officers. Many poignant cases troubled him sorely, and trouble me even now, because there were and are still many ex-officers without work through no fault of their own.

I have already shown how Douglas was averse to accepting any reward until something had been definitely settled in respect of the disabled officers and men, and I am quite sure that if it had only been himself that was concerned he would never have taken any recognition of what he had done. There were many others, however, to be considered, and the peculiar position was that the Government could not very well reward the others until my husband had consented. It was about a year or more before the announcements were made, and although Douglas felt more satisfied about the pensions awarded, I know that the delay caused a loss to those concerned of a year's interest on the grants given.

Home, to Douglas, was a very real thing. He was surrounded in childhood by his mother's love lavishly expended on him, and one very beautiful example of the return he made to her for that love was recounted to me, while we were engaged to be married, by some of his near relatives. I was told of it so that I should understand that

Douglas, having been such a good son, could not fail to be a good husband.

When his mother was lying ill shortly before her death the boy she loved would day after day, during his holidays, sit by her bedside and read or talk to her. To do this he had to give up all his games and outdoor life, and no one can have cared more for fresh air and exercise. On his sister Henrietta, too, he showered his affection. He appreciated to the full all that she had done for him, and his letters to her written from the Sudan and South Africa speak for themselves. He passed away in her house on the 29th of January 1928, but mercifully Henrietta herself was too ill at the time to realise that she had lost him, and she followed him very soon after.

To me and our children he could not have shown greater love, care, patience and understanding. It is sad that he did not live to see his younger children grow up, and be near his son to watch and guide him. Yet, I would not wish him here. Had he lived it would have meant great suffering for him. He died from the first attack of angina, and had he recovered he would have been forced to live the life of an invalid. His heart was in a very bad state, due, I am told, to the constant and prolonged strain of what he came through during the war. I did not know he was so ill, for he never complained. His end was hastened by a hunting accident while riding with the Buccleuch Hunt shortly before his death. We were riding together, he slightly ahead, and as we went forward to jump a fence his horse floundered, and to save itself threw up its head. The blow struck my husband in the face and broke several teeth. He did not realise how much he was hurt and wanted to go on, but I persuaded him to return home.

We motored to Edinburgh and saw our old friend Mr. Girdwood, the dentist, who examined Douglas's mouth and found that the injury was extensive and probably a fracture.



Douglas Haig  
9<sup>th</sup> Hussars.



ATBARA 1898

ATBARA, 1898

Print presented to Douglas by his brother officers—see page 321



Mr. Girdwood, however, did not like Douglas's colour and so we consulted Professor Fraser at once. As Douglas was to be X-rayed the following day, we stayed in Edinburgh that night and he seemed happy and cheerful. The X-ray showed a fracture as Mr. Girdwood had suspected, but as there was nothing to be done but to let it mend itself we returned to Bemersyde.

Douglas was due to attend a Scout Rally in London in about ten days' time and I had planned to go with him. My son, however, was taken very suddenly ill, and the day before we were due to leave it was discovered to be paratyphoid. Fortunately his temperature came down during the day, and the doctor thought it would be quite safe for me to leave him and travel with my husband.

We attended the Scout Rally at the Poppy Factory, Richmond, and Douglas of course addressed the boys. He stopped during his speech for a second or two looking deadly pale, but he was quite cheery on our way back. Unfortunately we were not staying at the same house. Douglas's sister Henrietta *always* kept a little single room for her brother so that he could stay there any time he went to London, but as her house was otherwise full on this occasion I had decided to stay with some friends quite near. The rally had been held on a Saturday, and when I called on the Sunday Douglas was out and so I never saw him. I tried to telephone to him but again he was not available. He was found dead during the night, and it was decided not to advise me until the early morning. The tragic news, however, did not reach me until after the whole world knew. When I arrived at Princes Gate there were dense crowds outside and I was attacked by many reporters. I dare not allow myself to dwell on that terrible moment, nor can I describe all the details of the funeral. I should like, however, to take this opportunity of acknowledging the help and kindness I received from Sir Walter Braithwaite, who made

## THE MAN I KNEW

all the arrangements in London. Dr. Fleming's sympathy was also so helpful, and I arranged with him for Douglas to lie in state in St. Columba's Church, where he had been an elder. There was a service there before the one held in Westminster Abbey. Later my husband was brought to Edinburgh, where he lay in state in St. Giles Cathedral. No one could have been kinder to me than Dr. Warr of St. Giles, and I was very grateful also to Sir William Peyton, who made all the arrangements in Edinburgh as Sir Walter Braithwaite had done in London.

Douglas had always expressed the wish that, when his time came, he would be laid to rest in the old family burial-ground at Dryburgh, and he was buried there with simple ceremony.

Besides the unforgettable tribute I received from the ex-service men I had many letters from all parts of the world. His Majesty the King sent me a very beautiful letter as did also the Prince of Wales, Princess Mary and the Prime Minister. I have carefully treasured these letters and many others.

. . . . .

It is hard, in the first terrible pain of bereavement, to go through the personal belongings of our loved ones. Things can hurt so much with their vivid reminder of our loss. But it has to be done, and in this tragic time I was comforted by the many evidences of the high courage with which Douglas lived and of the faith which always upheld him. I should like to record one of the things which strengthened me.

I often wondered about a certain picture that always hung in my husband's bedroom. It depicts an officer bringing a wounded Egyptian soldier into safety, under the fire of the enemy at Atbara. Some time afterwards the Duke of Atholl told me that the officer in the picture was Douglas himself







## BEMERSYDE

and that it illustrates an incident for which the regiment considered he merited the V.C. The picture was presented to Douglas by his brother officers to commemorate the occasion.

It was typical of my husband that I never learned from him the significance of that print. It was an expression of disappointment felt by his brother officers, who coveted for him the highest award for valour given to a soldier. He treasured to the end the token of their regard, but he did not tell even me of the deed which gained it. And when in later years honour upon honour was heaped upon him, and he was set in the highest place his King could give him, his heart warmed to the love and loyalty of his men, but his body, mind and spirit sought only his duty to them, his Sovereign and his country. Of reward and acclamation he thought not at all.

On his birth-certificate, by some strange chance, no Christian name appears; his name there is simply Haig. It is natural that I should think that to have been prophetic and should believe that from the first he was marked for greatness. But I *know* that he was a man inspired through his whole life by a sense of his duty to his day and generation. It was shown in small things as in great; in the moment of swift courage and in the long campaign. He was the servant of his destiny, and humbly, faithfully and without flinching he fulfilled it to the last.

THE END

